'CAT PEOPLE' screenwriter ALAN ORMSBY

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FANGORIA #17

MONSTERS • ALIENS • BIZARRE CREATURES

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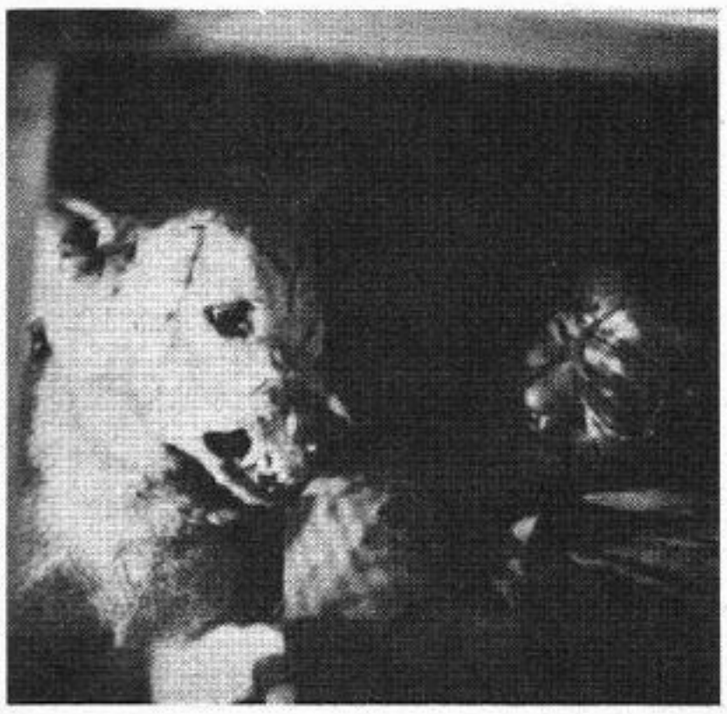

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FANGORIA

February, 1982 Issue #17

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The Cover: *Tim Johnson*, whose fine rendering of *An American Werewolf* graced our 14th issue's cover, interprets a tense dramatic highlight of the independent horror feature *Pranks*.

THANK YOU: Mick Garris, Alan Ormsby, John Donaldson, Tom Phillips, Sam Fuller, Wes Craven, the *Swamp Thing* cast and crew, Jeff Obrow, Steve Carpenter, Ted Bohus, Susan Oster, Tom Doran, all the folks from *Pranks*, *The Deadly Spawn* and *Bloody Pulp*, Herschell Gordon Lewis, Frank Henenlotter, Rick Rosenthal, Vic Ghidalia, Dick Smith, Fiona Lewis, Jerry Ohlinger.

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Production Assistants: Eileen Dempsey, Cindy Levine, Norma Garcia and Nancy Reichardt.

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Imagination Inc.

Hi again! It's really been crazy the past few weeks—I've been to both Pittsburgh and Canada to witness the filming of the concluding scenes of George Romero's *Creepshow* and John Carpenter's *The Thing*. That doesn't leave a lot of editorializing time for me—so I thought I'd cheat this time, and just offer a couple of lists . . .

Some Gripes . . .

1. Parents who cancel FANGORIA subscriptions, even though their teenaged kids paid for it with their own money.
2. Film folks who don't remember to say "this is off the record," and then threaten to sue you for quoting them accurately.
3. People, especially publicists, who only look at the pictures.
4. Film folks who call up and ask for you, and when you're not there, tell the receptionist that they're going to sue you for quoting them accurately. Then you can't reach them on the phone, and they never call back.
5. People who make a horror movie, but they don't want coverage to appear in FANGORIA, because someone might think that it's a horror movie.
6. Film publicists who ask you how to spell FANGORIA.
7. People who tell you, "nobody is getting those pictures," and then they turn up all over the place.
8. Film folks who say your magazine is too gory, but when their picture comes out they only send pictures of victims.
9. Producers who withhold effects photos, because they don't want the effects men to become well-known and raise their rates.
10. People who think this job is easy!

. . . And Some Joys!

1. Discovering a good horror film, especially those by first-time directors.
2. Conducting an interview with anyone whose main concern is giving honest answers.
3. Reading letters to "The Postal Zone," even when someone wants an argument!
4. Filmmakers who call or write personally to say that they appreciate our work.
5. Getting any set of incredible photos in the mail, and showing the best to our readers.
6. Being invited onto anyone's movie set, especially when I've got the time to go!
7. Getting in copies of a new issue, and feeling proud.
8. Meeting anyone who understands what we're trying to do here.
9. Getting paid for it.
10. Knowing that the joys outweigh the gripes!

Let's add one more gripe to the first list—finding errors in the magazine! These are bad enough when they upset a filmmaker or actor, but the *worst* ones are those that mislead our readers!

For instance—last issue's "Hidden Contest" was not on page 59, no matter *what* the contents page said! If you spent an hour or two trying to figure out a contest on that page, please accept our *abject apologies!!!* We are therefore giving you another chance to find the contest—which could be on *any* page of issue #16, and you have until March 10 to write to us, telling us exactly what our hidden message says. Winners will then be picked by drawing.

Meanwhile, our enormous staff (that's me, Everitt and Greenberger) are a bit backed up in sending our prizes on past contests, so there is no new contest in this issue. Just as soon as we've caught up, we intend to swing back into our contest-every-issue policy.

Uncle Bob!!

(When in Boston visit CANTONE's
—ask for BLIND ORPHANS.!)

The Postal Zone

We Love Ya!

Since it'll be just around Valentine's Day when this issue reaches you, we want to see lots of love letters rolling in from you lovely readers. Remember that federal regulations prohibit sending live, pumping hearts through the public mails.

The Postal Zone
FANGORIA Magazine
475 Park Avenue South 8th Floor
New York NY 10016

And remember that, even though we love ya, our schedule doesn't give us the time to answer your letters!

We're Just Wild About Jamie

Dear FANGORIA,

. . . I would just like to thank you for that fantastic interview with Jamie Lee Curtis in #15. I am her biggest fan and have a 67-page, 202 picture/article scrapbook with tapes and shirts and books. It's unbelievable! I have been waiting for someone to do an interview with her.

Leslie Green
4019 N. 2nd Street
Harrisburg, PA 17110

Dear FANGORIA,

. . . What do you mean "In her final encounter"? I hope it doesn't mean that you won't talk to Jamie Lee, the cute actress we all loved in the *Halloween* saga, anymore. How about some final encounters with the tasteless directors Sean Cunningham and Charles Kaufman, but please give us more on Jamie Lee.

Steve Camera
Yorba Linda, CA

Dear FANGORIA,

. . . I bought two copies of FANGORIA #15 because of the wonderful interview and photos of Jamie Lee Curtis. I was so happy to see FANGORIA get an interview with her. She is a very talented and beautiful actress and I'm glad that she has been able to break her horror film typecast (though I hope she will not rule out ever doing another one!). I saw *Halloween II* and enjoyed it very much. It was a very well done sequel and I hope Rick Rosenthal will do some more horror films.

Cory Black
422 Brown Street
Iowa City, IA 52240

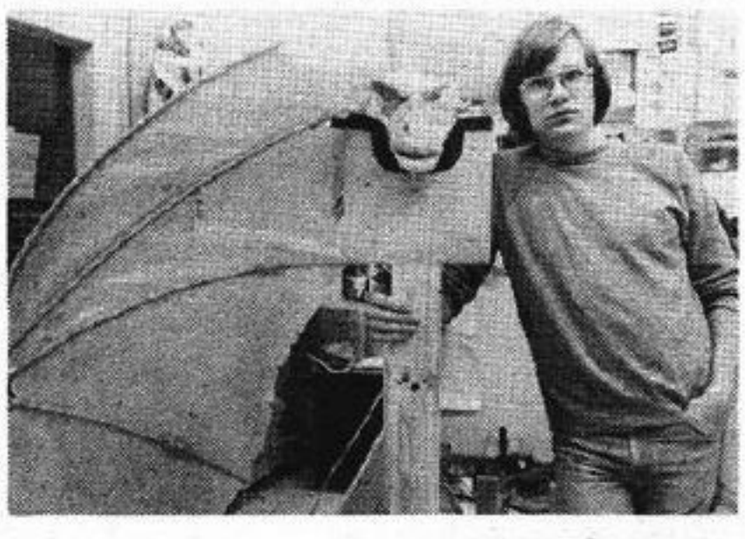
The TRUE Story

Dear FANGORIA,

. . . I would like to comment on a few points regarding issue #15 of FANGORIA.

In the Jamie Lee Curtis interview, I believe the movie she wanted to refer to involving the ants is *The Naked Jungle* and not *The Naked Prey*.

On the subject of the movie *King Cobra*, mentioned in the Monster Invasion column, it seems Mr. Wilson is a little misinformed about the event that gave him the inspiration for his film. He briefly states that a carnival



train derailed in Springfield, Missouri, releasing some poisonous serpents that killed many of the town's inhabitants. In fact, a number of cobras escaped from a roadside zoo when a new employee opened a shipping crate and ran when he found it was full of Indian Cobras. The town engaged in a massive search that included a truck mounted with speakers playing authentic "hindu snake charming music" in an attempt to lure the naturally deaf snakes out of hiding.

Amazingly enough, the truck ran over one of the escapees accidentally. Some of the snakes were found and killed, some were never found and assumed dead when winter hit. (Snakes are cold blooded and cannot survive cold temperatures.) No one was bitten or killed.

Lastly, Chris Walas is an acquaintance of mine. When are you going to print a decent photo of the man?!

Dane Knepper
1556 Lacy Blvd.
Sioux City, IO 51103

Was It A Good *Halloween?*

Dear Editor,

. . . Were other people as disappointed with the big *Halloween* weekend as I was?

I didn't care at all for NBC's version of *Halloween*, especially putting the last commercial break during the final attacks on Laurie. None of the killings were particularly gory to begin with, so I'm surprised that they were cut so severely. The conversation with the kids in the van should have been left in. And the new scenes weren't just time fillers with no need to be included, they went so far as to contradict the original film.

As for *Halloween II*, I think Michael killed too many people. The girl in the house at the beginning was not called for. I don't think that all the hospital deaths were needed. The killings in the first film were to lure Laurie into a trap. He didn't need to kill twice as many people in the second film. He also should have used only a knife to kill them. He stabbed every victim in part one with a knife, why would he suddenly change his method? So much for the script.

The director made the killings much, much too gory. The first one was great for its lack of blood. He also showed Michael too much. In the first one, he appears and disappears without warning. In the new one, there is shot after shot of him wandering around, especially in the hospital. He took away greatly from his mystique. In short, the whole thing was a major disappointment.

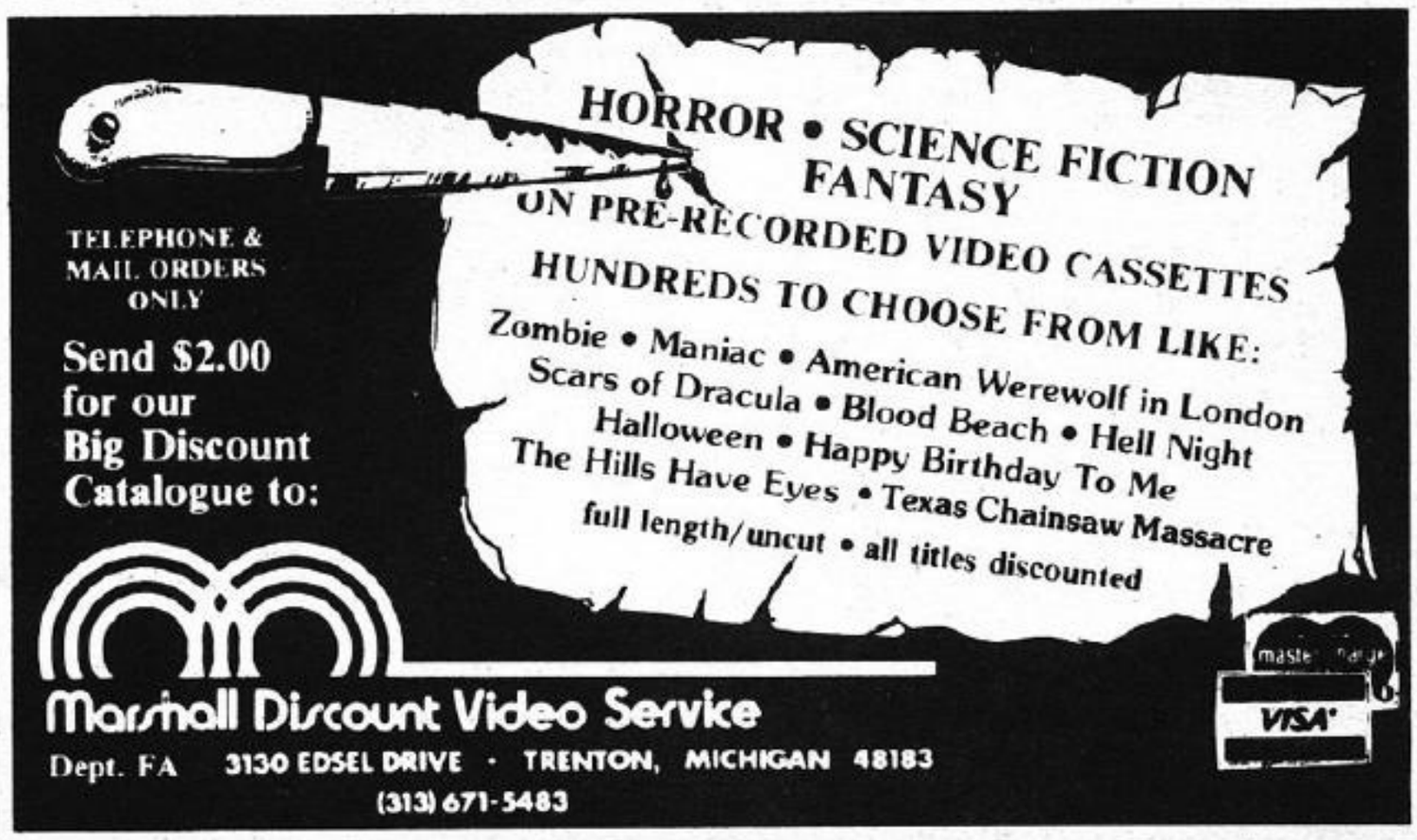
Frank Ward
1953 Heritage Drive
Palatine, IL 60067

Dear FANGORIA,

. . . Just saw *Halloween II* and it's not very good. Carpenter went for graphic violence in this one and spoiled it. Nice directorial debut by Rick Rosenthal though.

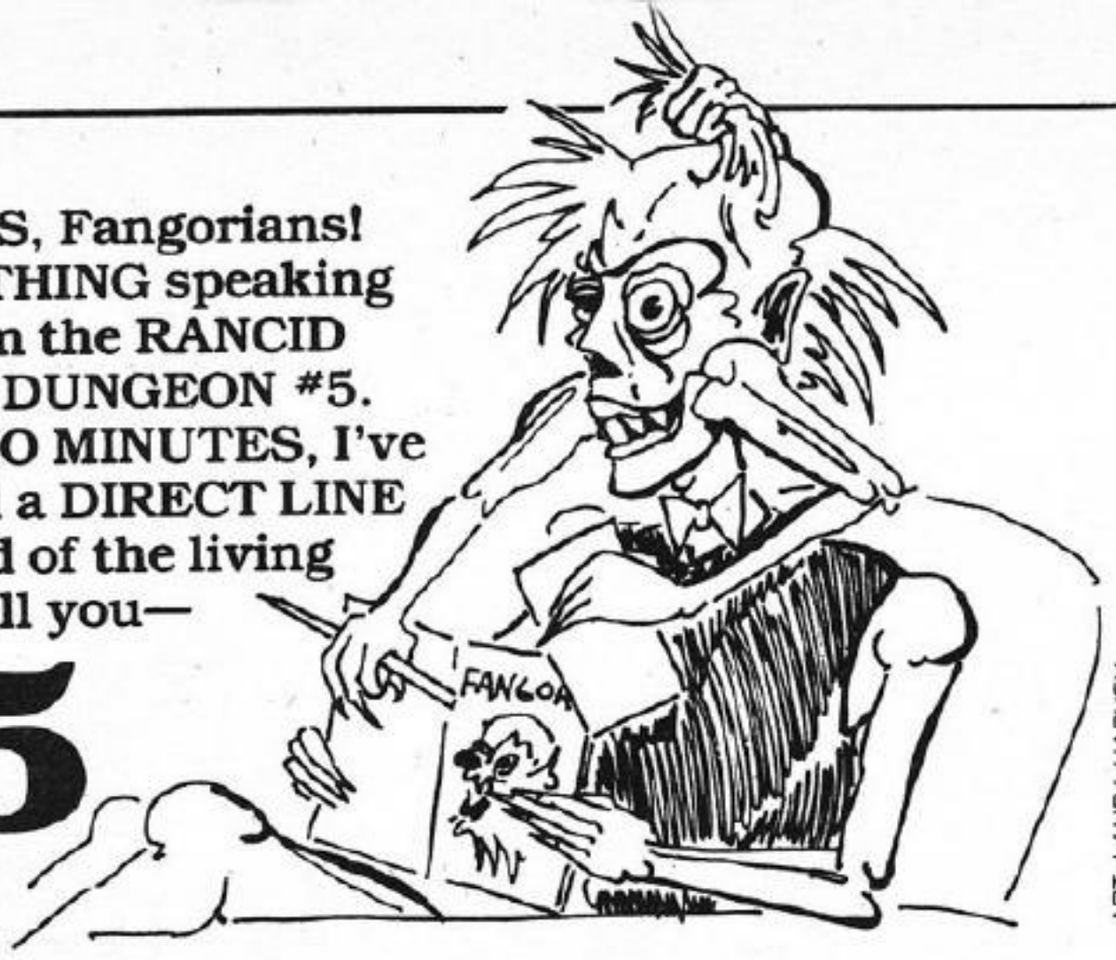
Some ridiculous plot devices were thrown in, the worst being that Laurie is Michael's sister. Anyone who saw *Halloween* knows that Michael just doesn't like girls, especially promiscuous ones. Another silly sequence was Ben Tramer's death. What a cop car was doing travelling at that speed on a residential street, I'll never know. I was surprised by Pamela Susan Shoop's nude scene. She's paid her dues and should be getting better roles than that. Did you also happen to notice that in both *Halloween* movies Michael's fall from the balcony is actually walking off a platform that is level with the top of the balcony railing?

David Reynolds
310-1477 Notre Dame Ave.
Winnipeg, MB, Canada R3E Op8



GREETINGS, Fangorians! This is The THING speaking to you from the RANCID DEPTHS of DUNGEON #5. For about TWO MINUTES, I've been granted a DIRECT LINE to the land of the living to tell you—

5



ART: LAURA HARVEY

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Dear FANGORIA,
. . . I have just seen *Halloween II* and thought it was superb. It was great to see Donald Pleasance and Jamie Lee Curtis again, Rick Rosenthal can direct quite well, but the gore could have been toned down a bit. Nevertheless, it was livelier and more suepenseful than the first one; the supernatural twists worked well in telling more about Michael Meyers (the killer) as did the secret of Laurie's past. I gave both Halloween films ****. Could you *please* write your opinion of *Halloween II?*

Dino Kapsalis
253 McElroy Avenue
Fort Lee, N.J. 07024

The Thing in Dungeon ® 5 reviewed* Halloween II *in* Castle Fangor *#9, sent to all subscribers with the last issue. See what you miss out on when you don't subscribe?*

Thoroughly WARPed?

Fang Folk,
. . . I've seen a lot of genre films over the past few years, many gems and some junk. *MIND WARP* (advertised as *Galaxy of Terror*, but shown here under its original title *Planet of Horrors* is no major classic, but it isn't total garbage, either. Its blending of elements from *ALIEN* and *Forbidden Planet* is bizarrely charming, the shocks are effective without being overtly gross (a sin of far too many of the movies you guys seem to love), and the acting is sharp for this type of film. Kudos to Ray Walston, Sid Haig, and especially Erin Moran for their contributions. Moran has the potential to be another Faith Domergue, who was a very underrated actress in her time. All in all, *MIND WARP* (or whatever it's called in your area) is worth the trouble to see.

Mitchell B. Craig
102 East Confederate Avenue

The REAL Problem

Dear FANGORIA,
. . . In reasponse to a letter in #14's "Postal Zone" *(Bad Projection)*, well, my friend, "going after the projectionists" will only serve to make everybody irritable. Your complaints should be addressed to the theater owner/manager.

I have been a Motion Picture Operator for 15 years; I started when I was 13 years old, in Brooklyn's Ridgewood section, with my grandfather. I learned my craft well, and have always given a good show—provided that the theater owners have kept up with the times. One big problem is *money*. Let's say a theater with about 900 seats needs a xenon bulb of 3000 to 3500 watts of lumens—cost: $900-$950, hours of life: about 700. To save money, they may install a bulb of 2000 to 2500 watts—cost: $500, hours of life: about 1200. The theater owner saves lots of money, and you, the moviegoing public, put up with dimly-lit screens, while the projectionist gets all the blame. Also, whether due to producers or film labs, there are many prints in release with very low contrast, adding to the darkness of the picture. And you can't expect good images from a drive-in screen. D.I. screens

The Postal Zone

are not protected from the elements—pollution, rain, snow, dust and anything that can accumulate serves to diminish a D.I. screen's ability to give a good image.

No projectionist wants to see a dark picture—we take our families to the show, too, and we don't like to be disappointed! I hope I have shed a little light on this subject.

Mr. J. Matteo
Fullerton, CA

You've certainly given us a clearer picture of the problem, J.M.! Thanks!

Message from Munns

Dear Mr. Martin:

. . . In your latest issue of FANGORIA (#15 on page 12), there is a photo of Swamp Thing's makeup being applied by Kenneth Horn. I was very disappointed that Swamp Films personnel did not furnish you with his name for the photo caption.

Ken Horn was far more than merely an assistant of mine. He was key artist of a crew of three (with Esther Mercado and Deborah Schankle) in charge of Swamp Thing's makeup and body suit throughout the entire film production on set. He, Esther and Deborah all deserve proper recognition for their tremendous efforts on this film under the most adverse of circumstances.

It is very important to me that my co-workers be credited for their contributions whenever possible and I insist in my contracts that they all be given screen credit with me. I would appreciate very much if you can give Ken the proper credit due him in your magazine.

Thank you for your attention to this request.

William Munns
Los Angeles, CA

How About 'Dimroom?'

Dear Fang,

Thanks for the item on *Darkroom* in the "Monster Invasion" section of FANGORIA #16. To date, its stories surpass those of *Night Gallery*, and are there with the best of *Outer Limits*, *Twilight Zone* and *Thriller*. You can tell those folks at Universal that they have a damn good show, and that I hope that it succeeds and will entertain us for years to come. Let us fans know how it fares in the ratings!

J.A. Frame
R.D. #1
Glenmore, PA 19343

Darkroom has been cancelled, as you must know by now. Though the first couple of episodes showed promise, we can't really consider it any great loss in itself; by the third week it was fairly clear that the folks in charge were anxious to protect *Darkroom*'s audience from seeing anything really frightening. And this is not the fault of the show's creative crew—see this issue's interview with Rick Rosenthal. We're about ready to give up hope of seeing any truly macabre series on television, with the exception of syndicated repeats. It's not "the limitations of the medium," it's the gutless wonders who run it.

Fargo—ria

Dear FANGORIA,

. . . I'd like to make a comment about the interview with Jamie Lee Curtis. She deserves all the gold in the world! She is a great lady and no matter what movie she's in, I know I'll enjoy it. I just wish she'd do more horror flicks.

She's just a super lady and there are only two women that mean more to me in the whole world (currently and besides my mother) and Jamie Lee Curtis is one of them! The other is country music beaut, Donna Fargo!

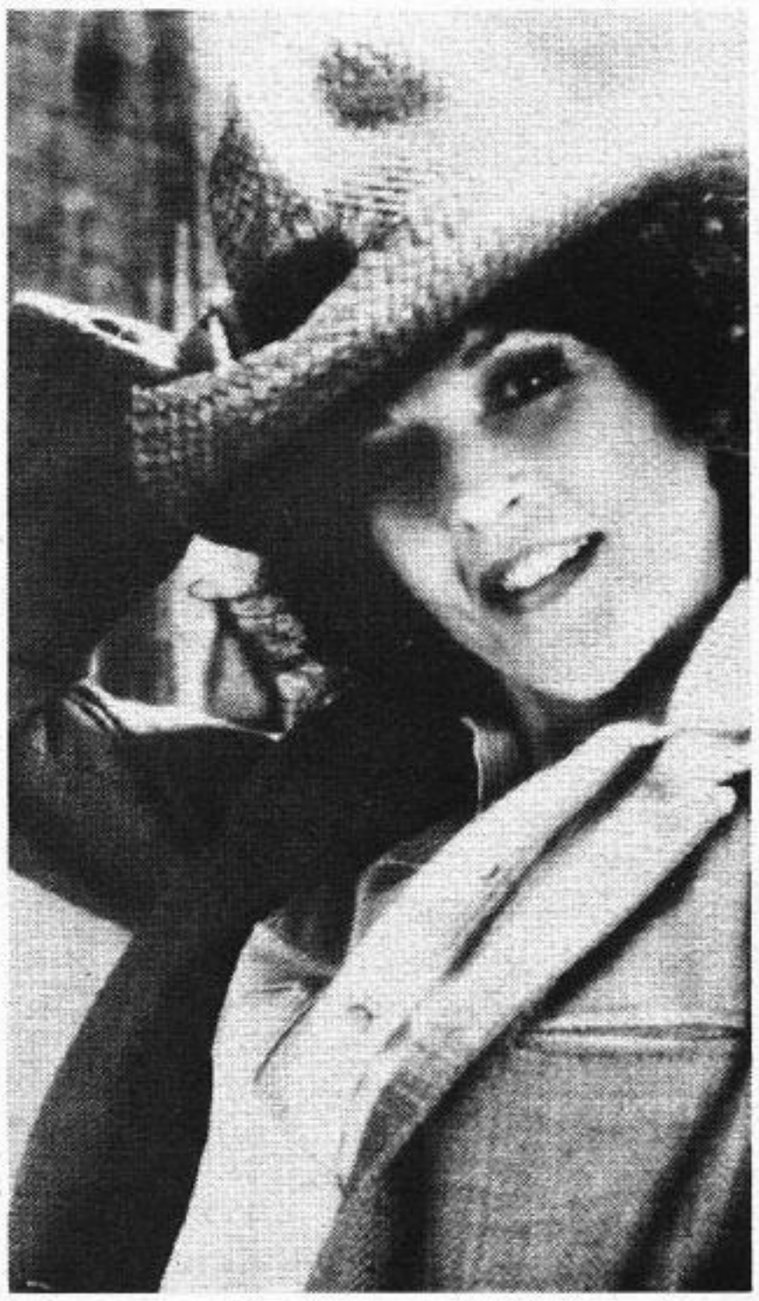
I have a weird fantasy concerning Donna Fargo. I wish they would cast her in a horror movie! I'd like to see her get scared to death in a *Halloween*-type movie! They could call it *The Happiest Girl*, what a great title.

Well, just a fantasy.

Again, Jamie Lee is the greatest, Donna Fargo is the best and, last but not least, FANGORIA magazine, beats ALL THE REST!!!

"Horror in My Veins"

Dave Thompson
Rte. 1 Box 421
Festus, Missouri 63028



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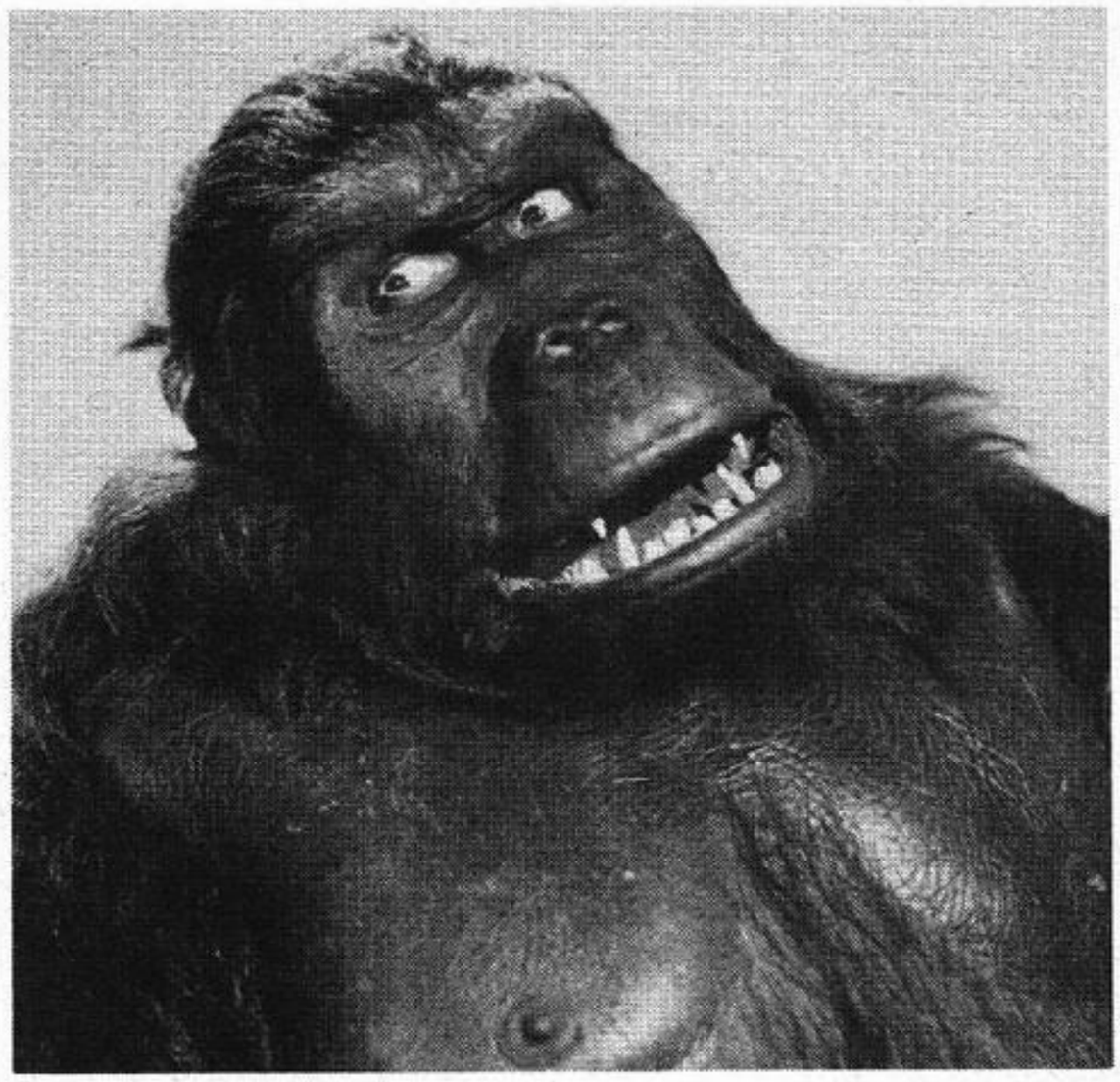
The Pit & the Pen
of
Alex Gordon

Gorillas come in all colors from Hollywood—black, white, in Technicolor and even in 3-D! In some of the early silent pictures, independent producers sought to exploit the "Beauty and the Beast" legend by presenting supposedly authentic travel documentaries featuring gorillas chasing nubile maidens through the jungles. Later, the gorilla became a staple of horror movies, both comedy and serious, in major as well as poverty-row productions. After 1926's *The Gorilla Hunt*, a pseudo-documentary, Ralph Spence's play *The Gorilla* was thrice filmed, in 1927, 1931 and 1939, the latter version being the best remembered and toplining the Ritz Brothers with horror favorites Bela Lugosi and Lionel Atwill in support. That same year, Columbia released "The Gorilla Hunt," a Color Rhapsody *Scrappy* cartoon directed by Ub Iwerks which had been preceded in 1930 by Walt Disney's *Mickey Mouse* cartoon, "The Gorilla Mystery." Joe Bonomo had donned gorilla costume for the 1929 Mascot serial, *The King of the Kongo*, in which serial favorites Walter Miller and Jacqueline Logan played leads with Boris Karloff as "Scarface" Machlin, supposed leader of an outlaw gang. Interestingly, Karloff was also featured in the *Scarface* gangster epic starring Paul Muni.

Edgar Allan Poe's *Murders in the Rue Morgue*, recognized as the first murder mystery story seen in print, came to the screen in 1932 with Bela Lugosi as Dr. Mirakle and future *What's My Line?* panelist Arlene Francis as one of his victims. Originally written by Poe in 1841, it was filmed again in 1954 with Karl Malden and in 1971 with Jason Robards and Herbert Lom, and is probably the most famous ape murder mystery.

The thirties and forties saw such independent cheapies as *The Monster Walks* with Rex Lease and Mischa Auer in which a live chimpanzee is shown in supposed horror close-ups which are quite ineffective; *White Pongo*, a strange combination of gorilla shots including even one fast stock shot of King Kong lurking behind a bush; and *Nabonga*, notable mainly for the appearance of Buster Crabbe. The early sound era was, of course, dominated by the greatest ape film of them all, the classic 1933 *King Kong* from the Edgar Wallace story brought to the screen by Ernest Schoedsack and Merian C. Cooper under the supervision of David O. Selznick at Radio Pictures with Robert Armstrong, Fay Wray and Bruce Cabot in the leads. So much has been written about this film and the special effects that I will not dwell on it here, only to remind readers how forgettable the Dino De Laurentiis remake was, proving that original story material is only as good as the hands of the film makers can make it. *Mighty Joe Young* was an entertaining adventure epic though not in the *King Kong* class by any means.

The great Bela Lugosi in Monogram's *The Ape Man* (1943).



Lugosi's pal from *The Ape Man*.

The Ape with Boris Karloff, *The Ape Man* with Bela Lugosi, and *Return of the Ape Man* with Lugosi were a trio from Monogram; *The Gorilla Man* was a Warner cheapie with John Loder; *The Monster and the Ape* was Columbia's serial contribution to the genre; *Bride of the Gorilla* had Raymond Burr in its cast; 1954's *Gorilla at Large* in color and 3-D had Anne Bancroft in the creature's clutches; and *Konga* and Herman Cohen's *Trog* could be mentioned in the passing parade.

Two of the most interesting and offbeat gorilla films came from producer Adrian Weiss who, with his son Steven Weiss, heads Weiss Global Enterprises, a top independent production and syndication company based in Oxnard and Beverly Hills, California. The Weiss Family, starting with Samuel Weiss, a Nickelodeon entrepreneur in the very early 1900's, followed by Louis Weiss, Adolph and Max Weiss, produced and distributed hundreds of films including the first Tarzan serial, *The Adventures of Tarzan,* starring Elmo Lincoln, which is still shown in specialized theaters and is available to film buffs. Adrian Weiss' gorilla films are 1945's *The White Gorilla* and 1958's *The Bride and the Beast*. Newly rediscovered by film buffs at colleges, universities, film festivals and midnight shows, *The White Gorilla* stars Ray "Crash" Corrigan, popular Republic serial star *(Undersea Kingdom, The Painted Stallion)*, Western hero *(The Three Mesquiteers* and *Range Busters* series) and some-time double for Johnny Weissmuller in MGM's *Tarzan* pictures. The leading lady is former Ziegfeld Follies star Lorraine Miller.

The story tells of Corrigan's return to Morgan's trading post in the jungle, mauled, bleeding, exhausted, relating how he tried to guide the Bradford party along usual jungle trails. Failing to convince Bradford of the danger faced by his headstrong decision to venture into the interior, Corrigan vividly recalls having met the dreaded white gorilla, until now believed to be a fantastic figment of men's imagination, created by the natives. Morgan and his men believe Corrigan to be delirious when he tells of Bradford and the girl, Allison, trapped in a tree by lions, dispersed only by the appearance of a small white boy carried on the trunk of an elephant, then vanishing into the jungle. The girl's father, blinded by jungle fever, has a map leading to the fabulous wealth concealed in the cave of the Cyclops. Attempts to steal the map lead to battles with lions, tigers, an elephant stampede, a hippopotamus encounter, the savage tiger men, a fight between a black gorilla and the white gorilla, the gorilla's abduction of the girl into the jungle, a chase and the eventual death of the monster.

The Bride and the Beast was produced and directed by Adrian Weiss and the screenplay from Weiss' original story was written by Edward D. Wood, Jr. of *Plan 9 from Outer Space* fame. The story is as follows:

When Laura (Charlotte Austin) and her husband, Dan (Lance Fuller), a big game hunter, arrive at their new home after their marriage, Laura learns that Dan has a pet gorilla caged in the cellar. An impelling force draws her to the cage. The gorilla is fascinated by the beautiful girl. To Dan's horror, the beast suddenly grabs Laura by the wrist, but she is unafraid. As Laura pulls away from the cage, the beast goes berserk, believing Dan might harm her. Laura and Dan's bridal night is one of terror. Unable to sleep, Laura sees the beast standing before her, just as she had sensed he would. The beast and bride seem entranced with one another. Dan awakens, fires a shot in the air, and the beast goes berserk once more as Dan now shoots to kill. The beast falls from a second story balustrade and is killed.

Regretting the beast's death, Laura tells Dan of her strange dreams. Puzzled, Dan calls Dr. Carl Reiner (William Justine), who hypnotizes Laura. In a regressed state, she lives as a gorilla in a previous life. Against the doctor's advice, Dan decides on an African safari for a honeymoon.

In Africa, Dan stalks two tigers, wounds one; the other is trapped in a pit. Laura, fearing for her husband's safety, sets out in search for him. When she is attacked by the wounded tiger, Dan kills the tiger in a hand to hand combat, as unconscious Laura is brought back to camp. Taro (Johnny Roth), Dan's gunbearer, swims across an alligator infested river to get a doctor. With glassy eyes, Laura sees a gorilla moving into their camp. Dan tries to kill the beast but the revolver jams. Knocked to the ground, Dan struggles to his feet only to see Laura carried off by the beast. Dan in pursuit, finds Laura surrounded by gorillas in a huge cave. He attacks and kills one of them and tries to pull Laura out. She does not recognize him and seems to have an iron-like grip on his arms. The beast which has abducted her almost kills Dan, and then flees with her again. Home once again, Dan and Doctor Reiner discuss the situation that found Laura being carried away by a gorilla never to be seen again.

Gorillas and apes—apes and gorillas—Hollywood and the movies' fascination with them continues and as long as there are film fans on this *Planet of the Apes* who patronize these pictures they will continue to be made.

Alan Ormsby

From live productions in the family garage to screenwriting Paul Schrader's Cat People!

By Bob Martin

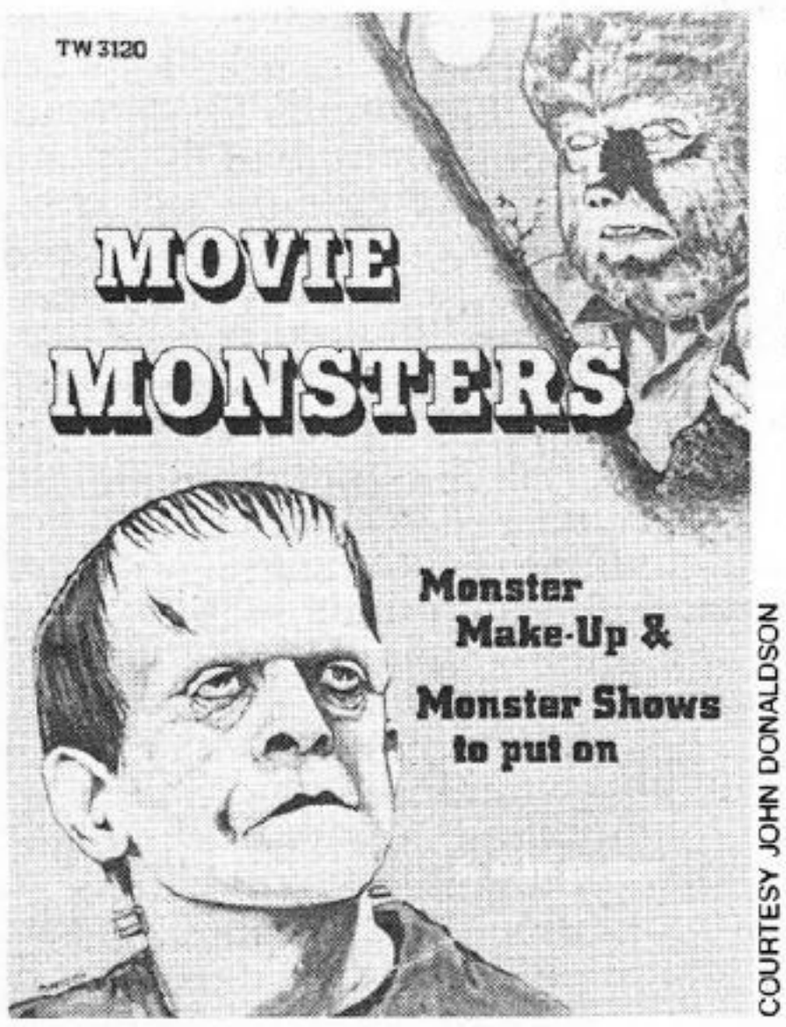
Over the past year, Universal Studios has launched production on an exceptional number of new fantasy films. Of these, most are in the field of horror; and, of Universal's new horror films, a surprising number are remakes of films from the vaults of RKO Radio Pictures—the B-movie factory that went quietly out of business nearly 30 years ago, when television made the Bs obsolete. John Carpenter's *The Thing, Dick Tracy* from John Landis, and Paul Schrader's *Cat People* were all made possible quite recently, when Universal acquired the rights to RKO's extensive inventory of film properties.

But perhaps "remake" is not the proper word to describe Universal's current program to remold these classics. Technical advances alone dictate that these films will be very different creatures from the originals; the most recent of these originals was *The Thing (From Another World)*, made over 30 years ago. Hollywood, not to mention the rest of the U.S. and the world, is now a very different place, populated with a very different kind of filmmaker. All three of the directors mentioned above are still young men, who probably first saw the originals of the films they are now remaking on television when they were still in grade-school.

The screenwriter of *Cat People*, Alan Ormsby, is of that same generation. To the general moviegoing public, he may seem an odd choice as a screenwriter for a major horror film. Until *Cat People*, his most prestigious credit was as screenwriter of *My Bodyguard*, a major "sleeper" of last year concerning a boy's efforts to cope with a group of teenaged toughs at his new high school. But afficianados of low-budget terror know Ormsby's name very well from his multi-faceted contributions to three horror films produced over the last 10 years.

Upon the release of his first film, Ormsby was interviewed in George Stover's mini-magazine, *The Black Oracle* (now grown a bit into *Cinemacabre*). There he numbered Val Lewton's *Cat People* as one of his favorite films. Strangely enough, though Lewton himself hated the title of the first film in his horror series, the title is practically all that was preserved in Ormsby's version, other than the basic concept of a love affair between a man and a woman who is convinced that the act of love will turn her into a cat. We wondered, in the light of his regard for the film, why the story was revised so radically.

"We don't think of *Cat People* as a remake at all," Ormsby replied. "It is a remake in the technical sense, and we have revised certain specific scenes. I've always had strong memories of that film, but when they screened it for me before I began writing, I was very disappointed. It had two or three terrific scenes, but the rest of it would barely make a TV movie today—tame and talky and unresolved. Certainly Val Lewton deserves a lot of credit—after Frankensteins and mummies and wolf men, the picture was a breath of fresh air, and, for a very low budget, he created a feeling of terror and suggestiveness, and an almost poetic atmosphere.



COURTESY JOHN DONALDSON

Ormsby's cover art for *Movie Monsters*.

"But today you're dealing with a situation where each film is trying to outdo the one before, and the audience has come to expect that, especially in terms of technology and state-of-the-art effects—that's one of the reasons why people will leave the house to go to the movies. So a film at all like Lewton's would be a very risky commercial prospect today."

Before discussing in detail the nature of Ormsby's revisions of the original's storyline—a matter we'll deal with in next issue's cover story—we discussed his initial fascination with monster movies, and the particular chain of events that led him to a film career.

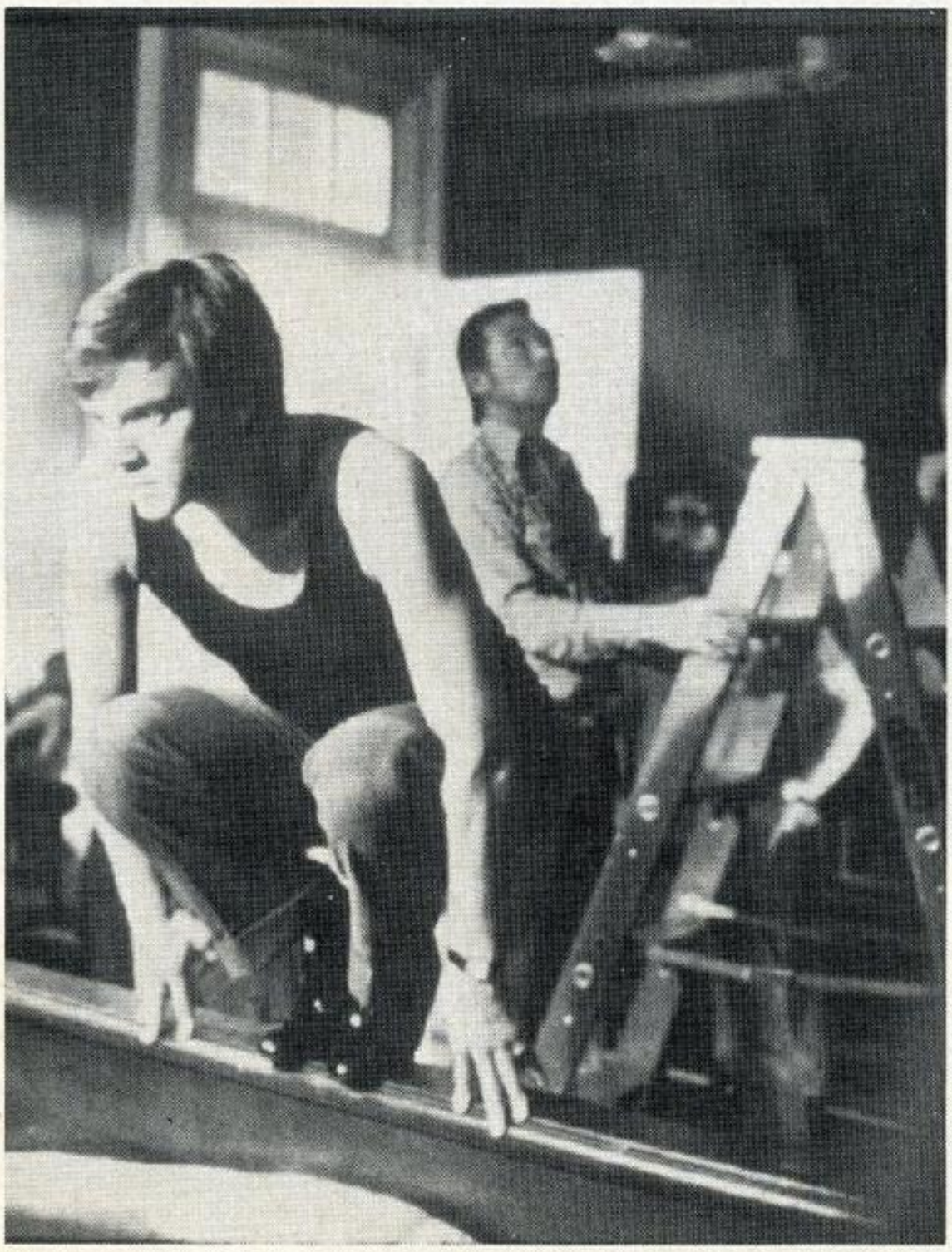
In that *Black Oracle* interview, Ormsby indicated that his passion for the entertainment field was first aroused by Universal's *Frankenstein*. "Very much so," Ormsby confirms, "that, and *King Kong*. I'd watch that again and again—even today, when it's on TV I'll stop and watch the whole thing and be wrapped in its magical quality; I think its fascination for me is that combination of real people and the animated monsters—it takes on that quality of a fairy tale. And Walt Disney films were another big thing for me, especially *Pinocchio*, which I must have seen 15 or 16 times.

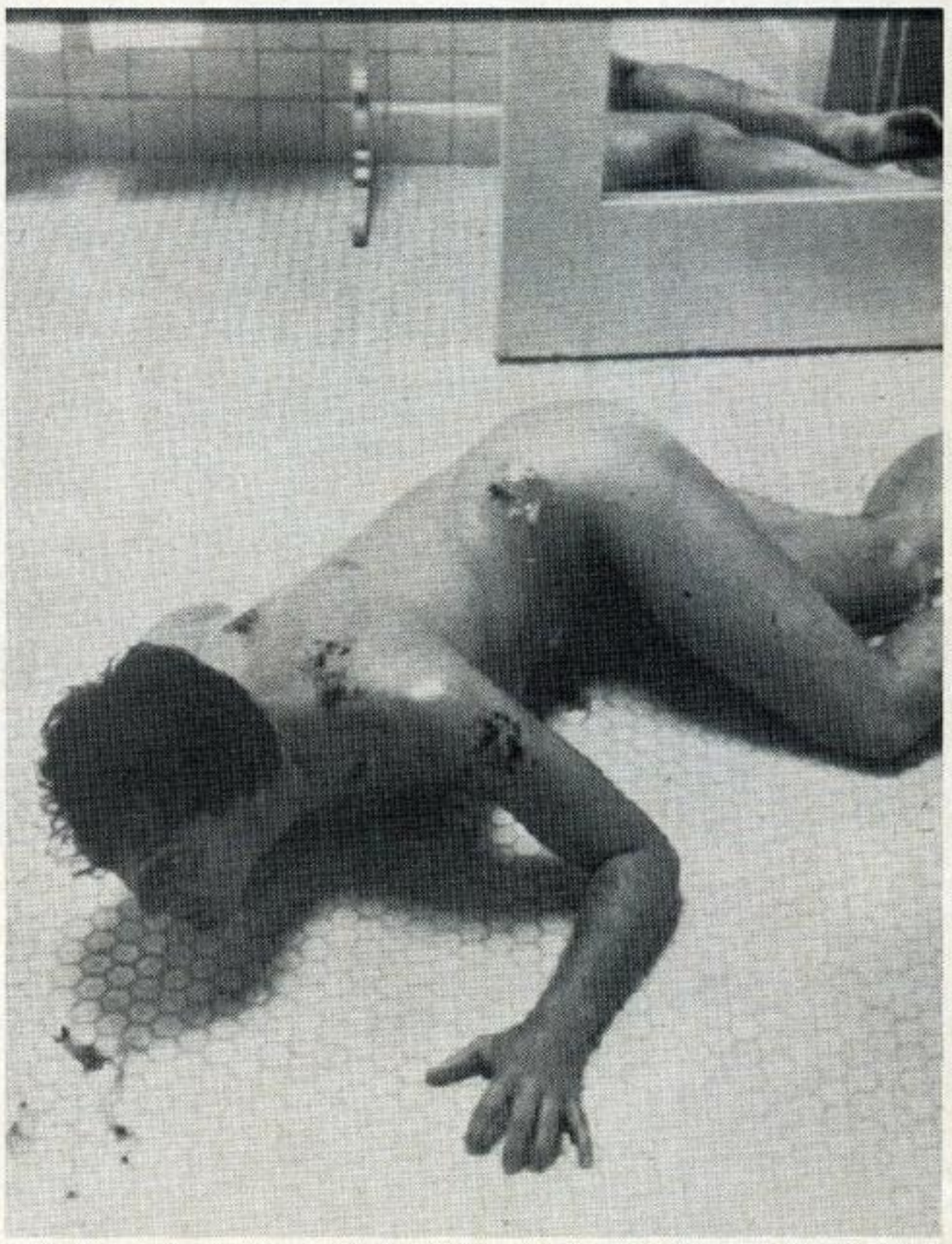
"So, until I was about 16, I was sure I'd be a cartoonist. I put out my own magazines, and developed ideas for comic strips that I'd submit to newspaper syndicates. I even recall, in fourth grade, doing what I thought was the equivalent of an animated film. I had a ream of very large sheets of paper, and I drew on the sheets the scenes of my story. I used to give live shows to the neighborhood in my garage, and for that I hung up the drawings, and took them down one by one as I narrated the story."

Later on, Ormsby's garage shows graduated to comedy/horror themes. "*Abbot and Costello Meet Frankenstein* was a big influence," Ormsby says, "and whenever I made a new friend, we'd try to develop a comedy team." Some of the flavor of Ormsby's later garage shows was captured in his book, *Movie Monsters*, written for Scholastic Books in 1975. Aimed primarily at the same age group as *Famous Monsters* magazine, it nevertheless had some nifty ideas for home makeups, ranging from a Frankenstein monster made from a brown paper bag to Blood a la Ormsby . Originally, Ormsby had wanted to include some of the more advanced makeups he had developed in his film work, but his editors prevented that from happening. "What adults think kids would like to read, and what kids actually like to read are two different things," Ormsby laments, "and they were afraid that some kids wouldn't follow directions exactly and get some kind of infection."

(Continued on Page 43)

Nastassia Kinski, Paul Schrader, and some guy in a leather jacket who is probably very important meditate on cat-nature.





Left, Malcolm McDowell takes a cat-like pose; and, right, has a hard time recovering from a night on the prowl.

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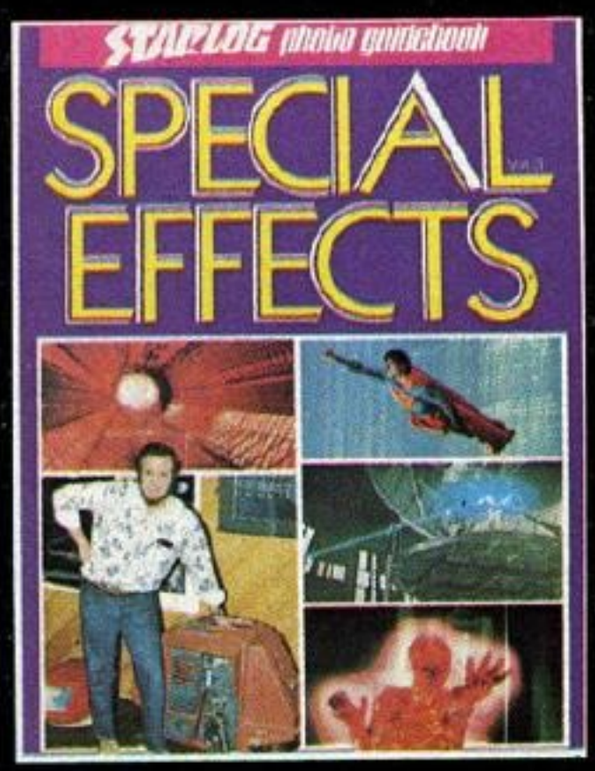

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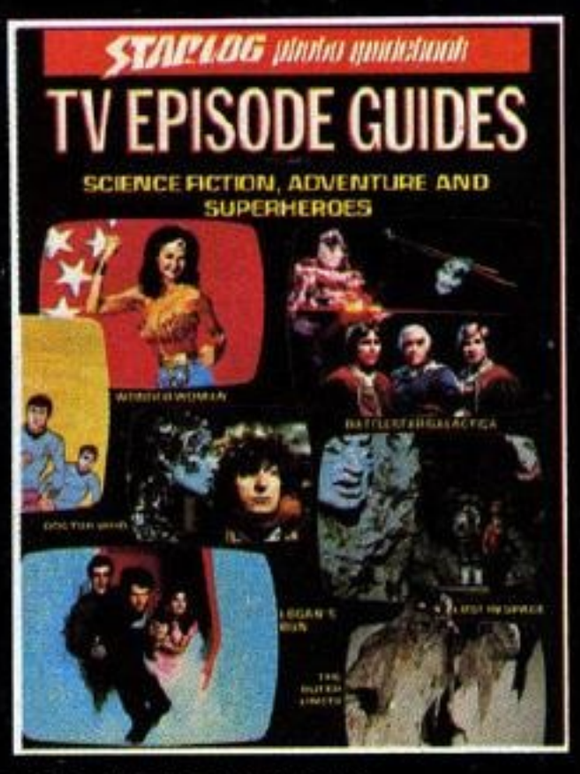

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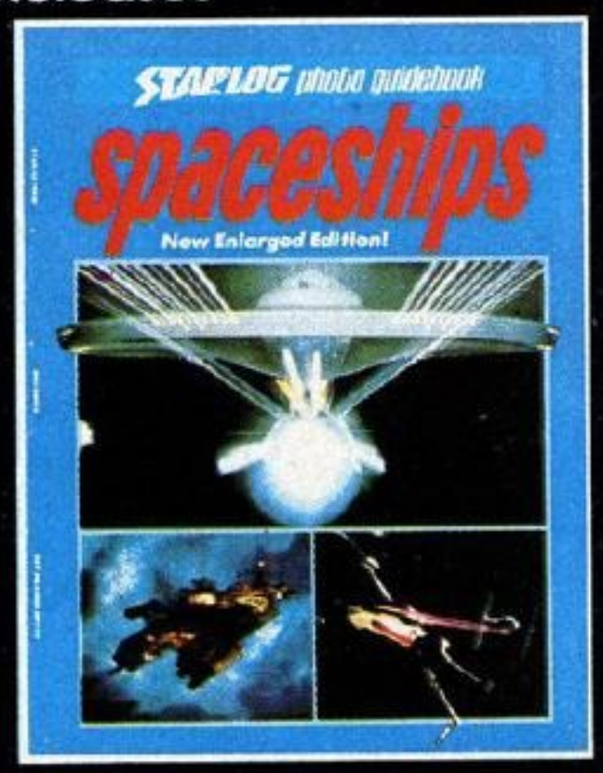

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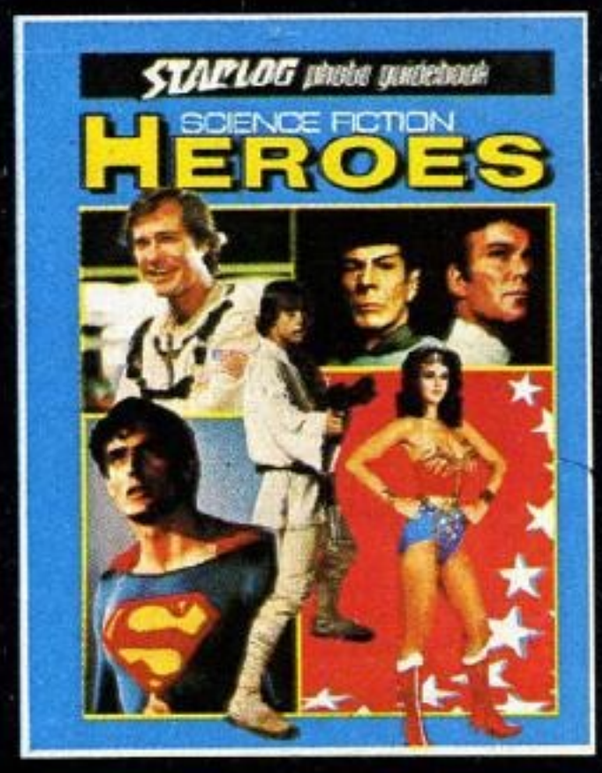

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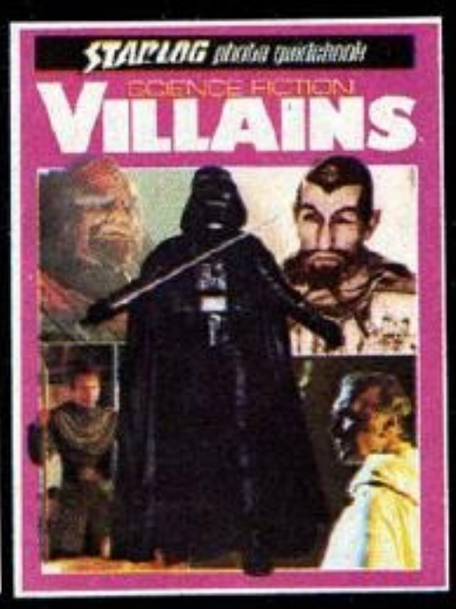

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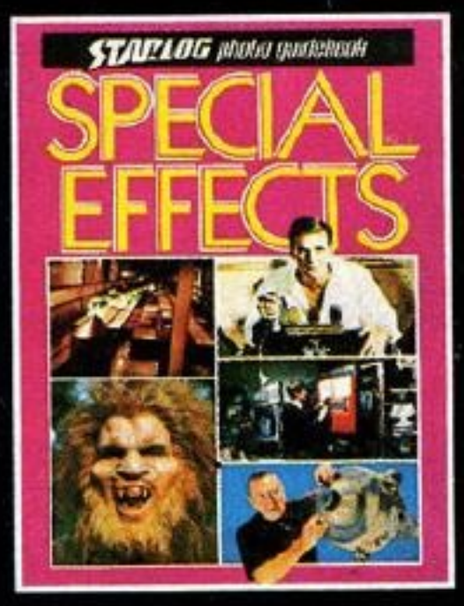

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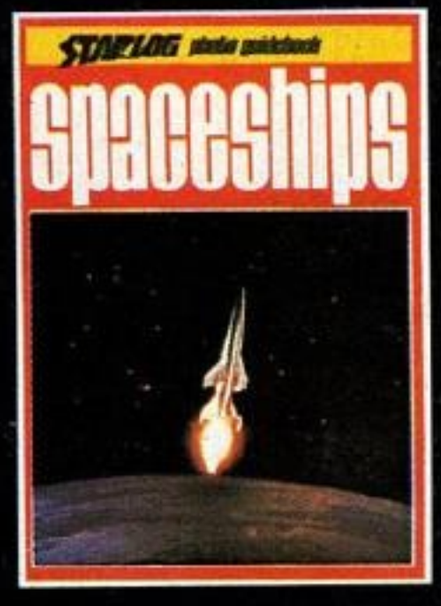

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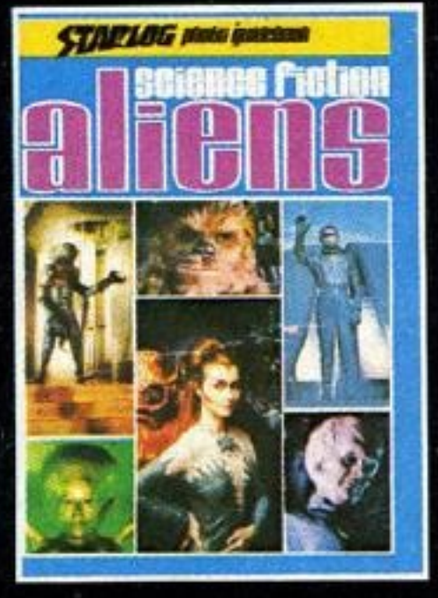

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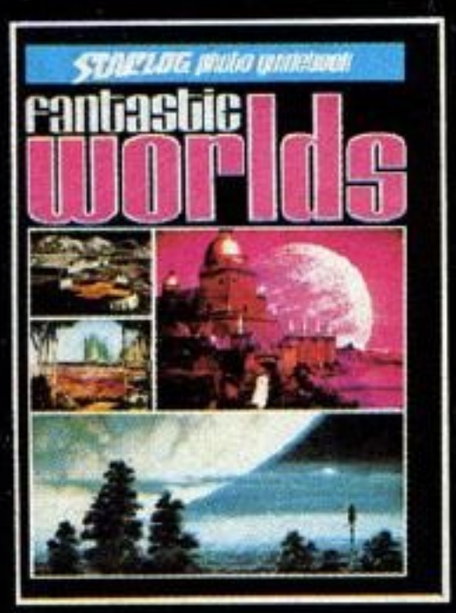

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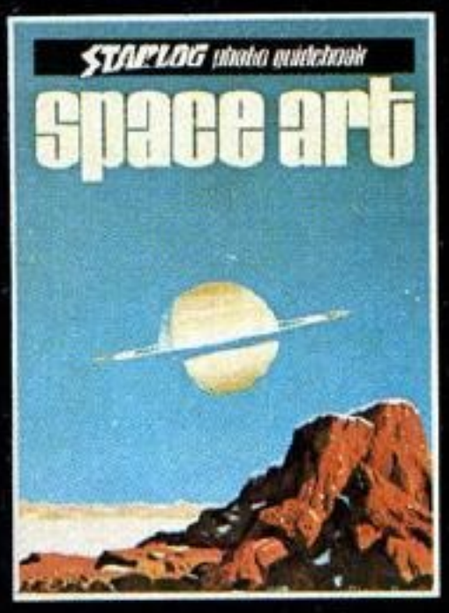

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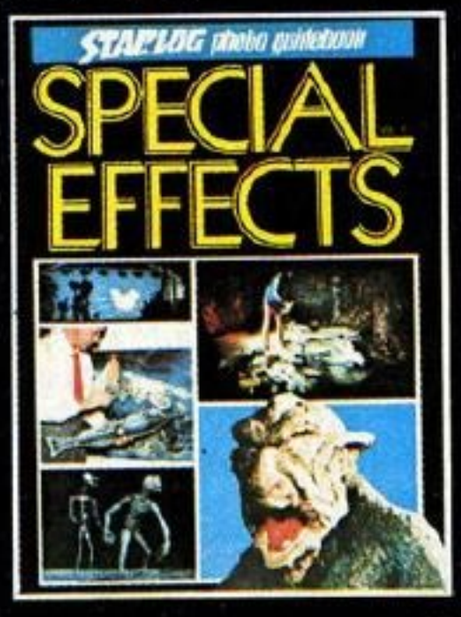

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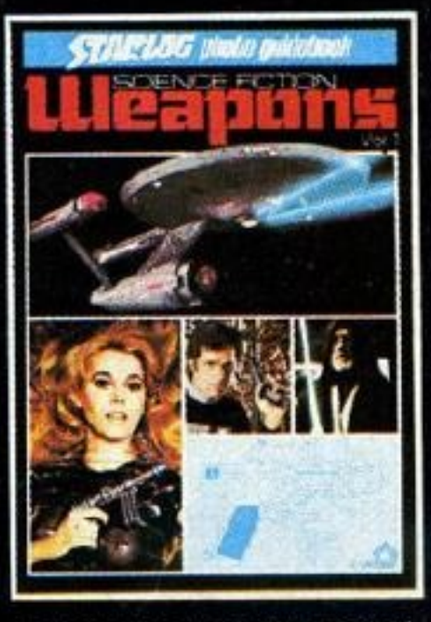

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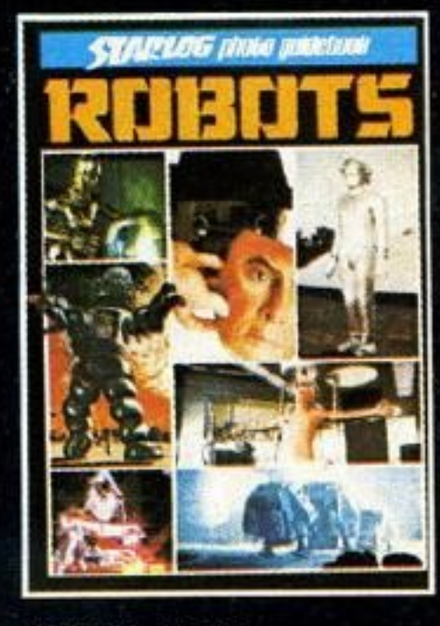

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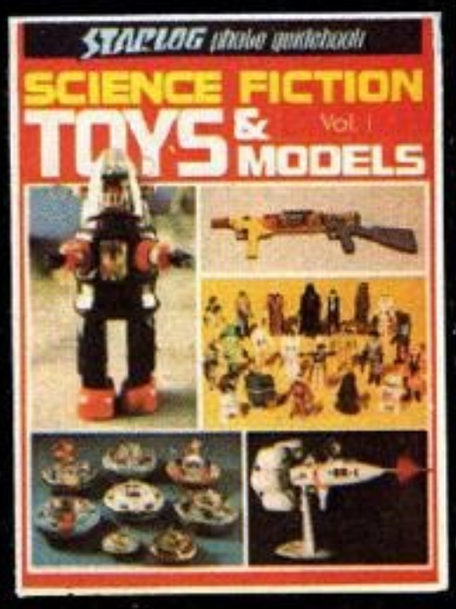

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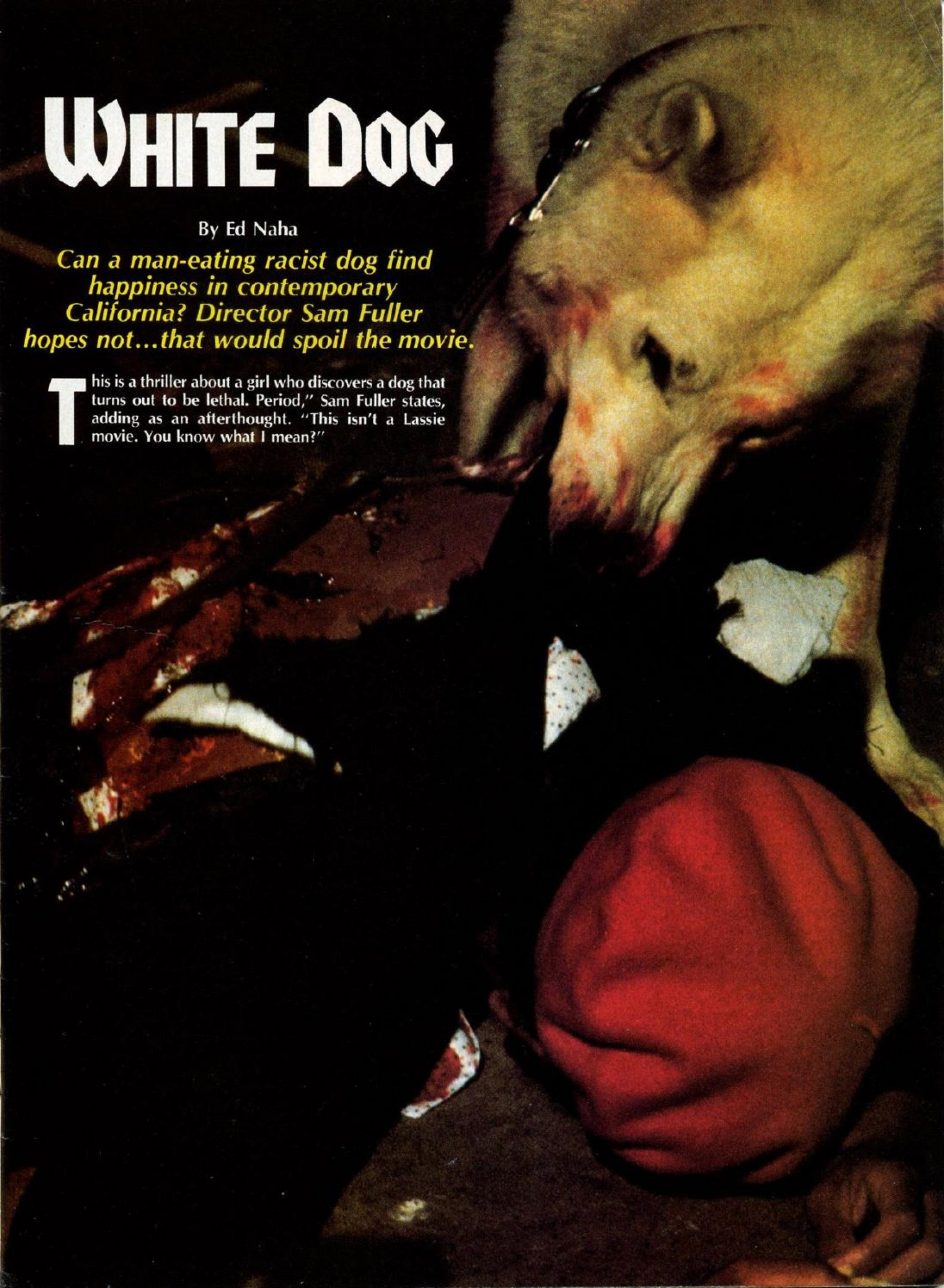
WHITE DOG

By Ed Naha

Can a man-eating racist dog find happiness in contemporary California? Director Sam Fuller hopes not...that would spoil the movie.

"This is a thriller about a girl who discovers a dog that turns out to be lethal. Period," Sam Fuller states, adding as an afterthought. "This isn't a Lassie movie. You know what I mean?"



In a few, terse sentences, veteran film director Sam Fuller has just summed up his latest, and probably, strangest film to date, *White Dog* . . . a bizarre melodrama which boasts a canine protagonist that is a racist. "A white dog trained to attack black people," Fuller nods.

If the premise of *White Dog* strikes the filmmaker as odd, he gives no outward indication of that fact. The acknowledged master of the American low-budget action-adventure, Fuller has tackled some pretty strange premises since his first movie, *I Shot Jesse James* in 1948. His matter-of-fact, hard-hitting treatment of blood-and-guts situations has earned him a critical cult following on both sides of the Atlantic.

A prolific director, novelist and screenplay writer, the former newspaperman has learned (inspired by budgetary restrictions) to reduce the most grandiose and eloquent plotlines into tense, intimate and sweat-generating stories.

His *House of Bamboo* (1955) pitted a lone undercover agent against a Tokyo protection racket; the corruption seen through the eyes of one observer. In *Shock Corridor* (1963) a reporter investigating an insane asylum got a first-hand glimpse of the world of madness by going undercover and entering the asylum as a patient. When the only person who knows his true identity dies, the newspaperman is stranded. In *The Big Red One* (1980), the World War II experience is graphically viewed by four raw recruits and their world-weary sergeant.

"I like close situations," Fuller admits. "In this movie, you'll not only see the incidents through the eyes of the white dog but you'll actually perceive how the dog thinks. You'll swear this dog is human. I directed him as if he *was* a human."

As jarring as the premise of *White Dog* may sound to some moviegoers, the idea is actually not a new one. In fact, the film had languished at Paramount Pictures for over six years prior to Fuller's involvement.

"I first encountered the *White Dog* story years ago when it appeared in *Life Magazine*," recalls Fuller. "It was a story by Romain Gary, the husband of [actress] Jean Seberg. I knew Romain when he was the French Consul in Los Angeles so I was intrigued.

"Basically, his story was about him discovering a dog on his doorway. He finds out that it's not an ordinary dog. It's a racist dog, trained by white bigots to attack blacks. Gary takes the dog to be retrained by a black man named Keys. Keys re-programs the dog to attack only white. That's the story.

"Basically, it was a symbolic approach by Gary; an attempt to represent his life with Seberg. It touched on their involvement with civil rights and the Black Panther movement."

An affectionate moment for McNichol and the murderous mutt.

After the story's publication, it was brought to Paramount as a Robert Evans project. Roman Polanski was set to direct. Curtis Hanson was tapped to do the screenplay. As quickly as the excitement for the project had mounted, it faded. Polanski encountered a few legal problems. Subsequently, so did Evans. *White Dog* hibernated at the studio for quite a few years.

The slant of Gary's story, according to Fuller, is what kept the dog at bay for that period of time. "It's a compounded racist approach," he states. "It's not bad enough having a white bastard doing that to a dog, right? You have to compound that idea in a very evil way, a racist way, by having a black man reversing the process."

Last year, Paramount decided to resurrect the film and asked Roger Corman alumni Jon Davison *(Airplane)* to produce. Davison was asked to mount the film quickly. A long-time movie buff, Davison immediately thought of Fuller to helm the project. After all, Fuller had done most of his movies under the gun; pressured by time and money and lack of same.

Fuller, however, was a hard fellow to approach at the time. An open, candid conversationalist, prone to phrases such as "ya get it?" "now, listen to this," "are you following all this," "can I give you an example?" and "sonofabitchin'," he was a hot commodity after *The Big Red One* and already committed to a project. Returning home from location scouting in Buenos Aires, Fuller walked into his living room and found his wife hanging up the phone. "She told me it was a guy named Jon Davison," Fuller recounts. "He and some executive from Paramount were coming over the next day to pitch a movie to me. I said that was impossible. I was already involved in one.

"They came over the following day and offered me *White Dog*. I was really excited about it. I arranged for my prior film commitment to be pushed back five months. Eventually it was scrapped.

"There were quite a few problems with *White Dog* from the outset. We had to re-work it entirely. When we approached the plot, we threw out all the racist elements. The only thing we retained was a white dog that attacked blacks.

"There had been six or seven scripts done over the years. The man who wrote the first script for Polanski turned out to be a friend of mine, Curtis Hanson. As a matter of fact, he came

over to The Shack [Fuller's nickname for his home] when he was doing it and I worked out a few scenes for him. How's that for goddamn irony?

"More or less, all of Paramount's script followed Gary's original story . . . which was a pretty bad direction for a movie to go. I didn't want to get involved in a racist film and I certainly didn't go for all that anti-black crap.

"So Curtis and I wrote the movie together in 10 or 12 days. We tried to finish it before the writers' strike began. Then, I tried to finish the film before the threatened directors' strike. I shot it in 43 days for $7 million. We came in on the nose."

In the new version, Julie Sawyer* (Kristy McNichol) adopts the white dog after accidentally hitting him with her car. After a short time, she begins to suspect that there's something off about her newfound friend. The dog disappears for long periods of time and returns with blood on its muzzle.

When the dog turns on a friend of hers, Julie takes it to Noah's Ark, a top-notch animal training facility owned by Carruthers (Burl Ives) and Keys (Paul Winfield). They suspect the creature is an attack dog. Eventually, the black co-owner, Keys, discovers the extent of the dog's training and attempts to undo the evil.

Unknown to Keys, however, the dog is quietly chewing a hole in its mesh cage . . . planning an escape.

"It's handled like a thriller," explains Fuller. "The reason this movie is going to shake a lot of people is that it's different than most thrillers. Most monster movies have Frankenstein or Dracula or zombies or mushrooms the size of houses that take over a village. I *love* all those horror films. But most of the monsters are totally fictitious.

"We have a real *dog*. He's a constant menace. A constant presence. He's lethal wherever he goes. And, it's legitimate. The tension is built-in right from the start. You don't have to fake anything."

Part of the impact of the movie, according to Fuller, rests in the fact that the dog is *more* than a mere canine. "He's almost human," he declares. "I treated him as a person. You will actually see this dog think through the reactions shown on his face.

"I'm quite proud of the way that aspect of the film works. I just wish I had a few more weeks to work with the dog. It was hard to establish communications. I didn't know his language. Ya get me?

"I mean, this isn't Lassie or Rin-Tin-Tin. It's not about a nice dog that jumps and barks and runs alongside a kid. This dog is a survivor. It does things intentionally. You see that.

"Can I give you an example?" the director asks parenthetically. "When the girl takes the dog to the vet, the dog is stretched out on a table. The girl is explaining the accident to the doctor. 'I couldn't see him. It was too dark. I *hit* him.'

"When she says 'hit,' the dog opens its eyes and, for the first time, sees the girl not four feet away. You have the first encounter between victim and driver. It's just like you opening *your* eyes and, being semi-conscious and lying in a gutter, staring at some man standing over you telling someone else 'I just accidentally shot this sonofabitch.' You're looking right at him and he's chatting about your life.

"You instinctively *feel* the jolt the dog experiences in this scene. Originally, we were going to show the dog's viewpoint with effects. Then, we decided against it. We thought we could handle his perspective more logically and acceptably if we filmed it from his point of view but without any jazzing up.

"For instance, when the dog is in the compound, he's trying to escape. We handle the scene the way it would be done if it concerned a human planning a jailbreak. The dog chews his way out of the cage. There's now only an electrified fence separating him from freedom.

"Now, pretend our dog is Bogart or Cagney. In a Bogart film, all the other prisoners would know about the jailbreak in advance. They'd hear the sirens or spot the searchlights and cheer the con on. In our movie, after the dog makes his break, the animals go wild, rooting for him to make it over the fence. Coyotes, wolves, lions, tigers, elephants . . . they're all going nuts! 'One of us not only has gotten out of his cage . . . one of us is going to get over the fence!'

"Now, there are searchlights all over the place. The dog hides under a truck. From his vantage point, he spots a small vehicle, parked next to a larger one, parked next to a bigger truck, parked next to the fence.

"We see the dog's face. It's studying the height of each vehicle. We cut back to the cab of the truck. We can almost hear that dog thinking: 'Goddammit. If I can jump from that onto that onto *that*, I can clear that sonofabitch fence!'

"That's how a human would react. That's how we make our dog understandable. We cut from his eyes to a

Top: Kristy McNichol offers her fast food lunch to the killer pup. Above: Trainer Paul Winfield confronts the burger-crazed canine.

*As a tribute to Gary, Fuller has named his lead characters Julie Sawyer and Roland Gray (played by Jameson Parker); JS and RG being the initials of Gary and Seberg. Seberg committed suicide after an effective FBI smear campaign connecting her and her dead child with the Black Panthers. Gary, grief-stricken, committed suicide in 1980.

Director Fuller and his furry star on location for the escape sequence.

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vehicle to his eyes to another vehicle and back to his eyes. You can almost hear the wheels turning. I had a hell of a lot of fun structuring those scenes. I mean, this isn't *The Doberman Gang*, where the dogs sit up and growl and find purses. This dog is cunning. He kills. He attacks. When he leaps, he flies through the air. You can feel his blind rage, the emotional confusion."

With action and the characters' constant fear of an attack of canine munchies now being emphasized, Fuller feels that he's successfully exorcised the spirit of racism that haunted the original premise.

"If anyone complains about this movie," he chuckles, "it'll be the Klan. Black audiences should love Keys. He's a great character. A wonderful man. He isn't played as a race. He's played as a scientist.

"He's not just an animal trainer but an anthropologist. His parents are anthropologists and their parents as well. He's part of a family that's comparable to the Leaky family in archeology. He has a tremendous academic background.

"He's perfectly content working in this animal compound because, to him, it's a large laboratory. Each animal is in a test tube as far as he's concerned. He's more relaxed and interested in this informal approach than in surrounding himself with textbooks.

"When this black anthropologist encounters this racist dog, it doesn't mean anything to him personally. He wouldn't care if the dog attacked whites, browns, pinks or blues. He is interested in dealing with this dog only because it gives him a chance to go inside the dog's brain without using a knife. It becomes a challenge for him to de-program the animal. Keys knows everything about an animal's brain. To enact change without operating, without performing a lobotomy, excites him.

"He only loses his scientific composure once during the film after finding one of the dog's victims. His shell breaks. 'I would have given anything to put a bullet through that bastard's brain,' he blurts to the girl. But he couldn't conduct his experiment on a dead dog, could he?

"Keys is an interesting character. He realizes that the dog isn't inherently evil. In fact, the dog is quite docile and loving when not under the influence of its past. Keys wants nothing more than to save the dog. To do that, he has to pit his own will against the animal's. They're like two gladiators, fighting within the physical confines of the compound.

"He actually explains a lot of the dog's personality to the girl who is, at first, confused and, then, repulsed by the dog's killer instincts. She doesn't understand what could have made the dog so viscious.

"The scientist explains that, when the dog was a puppy, its first owners hired black drunks or hopheads to beat the hell out of it. All the puppy sees are black hands coming down on it. All it feels is pain. It's no wonder the full-grown dog reacts as it does to blacks.

"The message of this movie is about racism," Fuller continues. "When someone's been brought up as a racist from childhood, from their puppyhood, you can't reason with them. You can't change their minds, no matter if they're a man or a woman. You can't use logic. You might as well be talking to a wall.

"To change attitudes in this country, you have to reach the racists' children. You have to reach the would-be racists when they're young. The moral of the movie is implied but not stated. If you're going to change people, go for them in their formative years. That's the only way to defeat racism."

With or without the moralizing, Fuller believes that *White Dog* is going to put the bite on thrill-seeking audiences this summer. "It's unrelenting," he beams, obviously enthused about the picture. "It's based on individual and collective hate and bigotry, violence and killing. This isn't *Rosemary's Baby* or some outer space thing. This is *real*."

He pauses for a moment to let his words sink in, before adding. "Ya get it?"

Part 3—On The Set of *Swamp Thing*

Wes Craven!

Also: Dinner with a Playmate.

By Bob Martin

One of the more interesting interviews we had while we were down in Charlotte, South Carolina was held over dinner in one of Charlotte's finer restaurants. Among those present were Dick Durock, the stunt player who wears the Swamp Thing suit throughout the film; unfortunately, Durock—who bears a rough-hewn resemblance to Cary Grant when he's not suited up—was seated at the table's far corner. But we had no cause for complaint, as the center of attention at our side of the table was Karen Price, best known as Miss January, 1981.

Price had gotten her brief role as an employee of the evil Arcand through *Playboy* magazine, which is often used by producers as a source for attractive young actresses, a practice which offers the fringe benefit of publicity for the magazine and for the films involved. Sadly, the only recent "success stories" connected with this policy have ended in tragedy—the deaths of Claudia Jennings and Dorothy Stratten.

But the examples of Jennings and Stratten cast no shadow over Price's plans. For her, acting is a for-the-moment thing. She had already completed her role at the time we spoke, and was anxious to get back home to her boyfriend in California and her favorite hang-out, Muscle Beach. In fact, she told us she had recently turned down a starring role in another feature film.

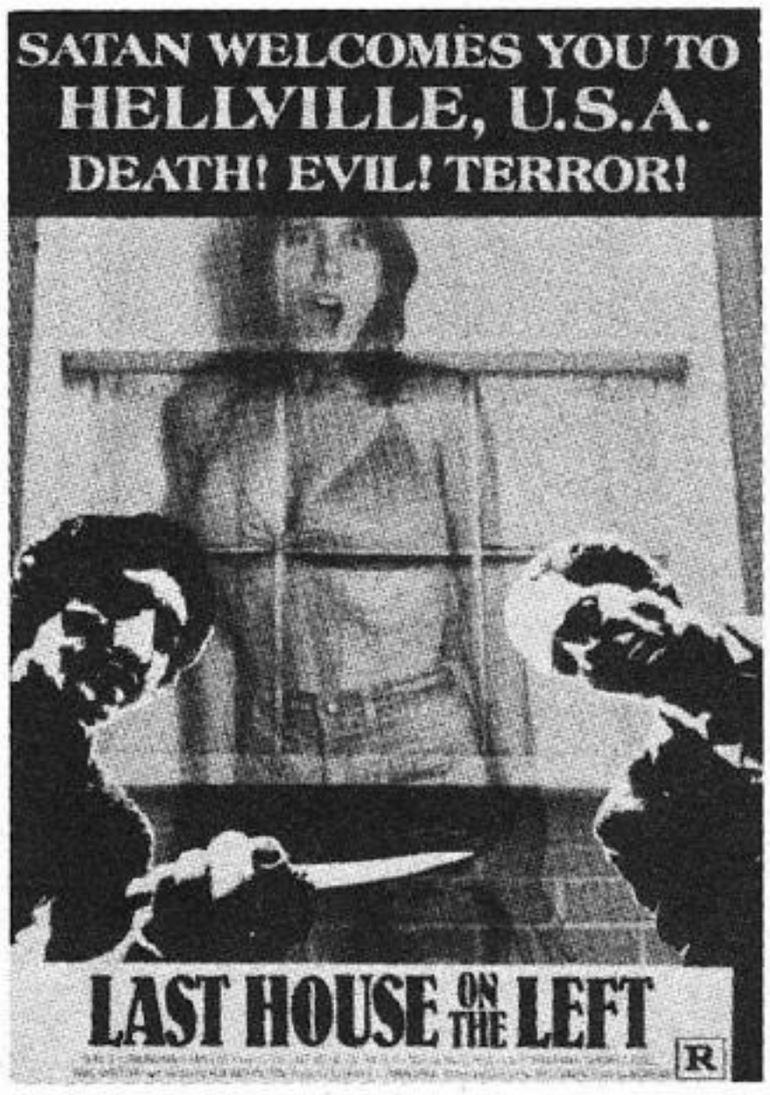
"It's called *Fire and Ice,* a fantasy film," she informed us. "I had to turn it down, though, because I would have had to perform topless." At this point, Tom Seligson, *Gallery* magazine's movie columnist, and an expert on these matters, entered the conversation. "Isn't that going to be an animated film?"

"Yes, but it's going to be entirely filmed and then painted over—like *Lord of the Rings*. You'll still be able to see the actors," Price replied.

At this point, Seligson's innate sense of logic came to the fore. "But didn't you pose totally nude for *Playboy?*" he asked.

"That was different," Price replied. "I was nude, but there was an article with it that told everybody who I was."

(Later research told us that Karen, 38-26-37, had just turned 20 at the time of her *Playboy* appearance. Favorite Movies: *Heaven Can Wait, The Blue Lagoon, Airplane!* and *Hangar 18.)*



Craven made his first big splatter in the horror field with *Last House on the Left*, the movie designed to make you faint.

We would have attempted to learn more about Bakshi's next movie, except that one of the Avco publicists who had joined us for dinner spent the rest of the meal in a hopeless attempt to convince Price that she should extend her stay in Charlotte.

Though our failed mission lasted well into the night, the next day we were once again on the set bright and early, and found our first opportunity to speak at any length with Wes Craven.

On the set, Craven is a very quiet type, communicating with his actors and assistants briefly and in whispers. In an interview situation, he is equally modest, almost shy, in keeping with his slender, almost frail-seeming appearance. Again, because of the nature of our set-visit, the interview was shared with a group of journalists; the first question, by Dan Scapperotti of *Cinefantastique*, concerned *Swamp Thing*'s comic book origins.

"The story, especially the first part of it, is certainly very close to its comic book origins," Craven answered. "Alec Holland is a scientist stationed in the swamp to do plant research; the names of the major characters can all be found in the comic book, though not always in the same sequence. We are going for a stylistic, low angle, weird-shadowed comic book look; but we're trying to keep all the emotions very human, underplaying it a lot rather than going for camp. Louis Jourdan, for instance, plays Arcane as a very subtle villain, rather than as a broad, moustache twirling villain of gore.

"I'd never read the *Swamp Thing* comics when the question of the film came up. I had read comics as a kid—*Superman, Batman, Blackhawk*. But I was fascinated by *Swamp Thing* when it was proposed, because here was a monster that had a human being inside; one that maintained all his human abilities and emotions. What I saw in it was that "beauty and the beast" feeling—how does a human being feel about his darker, ugly side? When it's exposed, can someone love that? That was the interesting thing to me, the love story, and one of the major changes I made from the comic story had to do with that, changing the government agent Cable from a male character into Barbeau's role, so there is a love interest there throughout the film. And Holland's sister (Nan Brown), who is killed early on, was his wife in the comic, leaving him without a love

Janus Blythe as Ruby, the rebellious daughter of a savage family in *The Hills Have Eyes*.

PHOTO: © 1978 UNITED ARTISTS

Craven's "white-bread family" under assault in *The Hills Have Eyes*.

interest throughout the comic story."

Virtually all of the incidents in the film—other than Swampie's affair with Cable—have precedence in the comic book, according to Craven. "I took things from the entire run of the comic book," says Craven. "For instance, there is a sequence in one of the books where Arcane becomes a monster, though there it's a werewolf-creature."

In answer to a reporter who inquired whether there was any hope for Alec Holland to return to his handsome scientist self, Craven indicated that the question is left unanswered. "At the end, we more or less say that he's got to go off in the swamps for a while . . . but he'll be back."

After a brief interruption while Craven attended to some directorial matters, we resumed our talk, discussing Craven's first involvement with film.

Craven first developed a hankering for movie work late in life. At 30 he was a high school teacher looking for a starting position somewhere in the film industry. The late singer, Harry Chapin, was an old school friend; Chapin's brother was a film editor, and he arranged for Craven to meet him. As it happened, the same day that Craven met Chapin's brother, a messenger boy was fired from the firm. "He asked me if I knew any kids that wanted a summer job as a messenger, and I said, 'I'll do it.' So I was a 36-year-old messenger boy for a while. Pretty soon, I showed that I could write, and I learned how to sync up dailies, and so on. About a year later, I was able to switch jobs, to work as a sync-up assistant on a film with Sean Cunningham. The cameraman was a 'filmmaker' type, and he and Sean kept having fallings-out, and the cameraman would leave. Being able to write a little and edit a little, I was able to step up."

The film was *Together*, one of the most stylish films made for the porno market back in the early 70s, when there was still hope that good filmmaking could be done with an X rating. The movie had a slick, pseudo-documentary style, decribed by Cunningham as "a 90-minute Winston commercial for sex." According to Craven, it was made for $70,000 and earned close to $7 million.

"The distributing company, Hallmark Productions, said to us, 'Guys, you should make a knock-down, drag-out horror movie,' and they gave us $50,000 to do it," recalls Craven. 'Sean sat down and said, 'Look, I think we can do this in three weeks for $40,000 and pocket the 10. Can you come up with anything?' So I went out to Long Island for a weekend, and wrote the first draft of *Last House on the Left*. After writing the script, I left it off at a Xerox place. Two days in a row, it wasn't ready—I found out that everyone in the place had been reading it! We sent it off to the distributor, they loved it and gave us another $40,000 to make the film."

Even at $90,000, a similar film today would cost two to three times as much to make, even in 16mm and with an all-amateur cast, as was done with *Last House*. Craven's story concerned a group of juvenile delinquents who prefigure the punk generation in attitude and dress—and to some extent in their passion for violence. When they kill two love-beaded teenage girls on their way to a hippy rock concert, and then show up at the home of one girl's parents one could, in retrospect, see the film as a treatise on the death of the love generation . . . and what comes after it.

The film was a phenomenal success, as independent films go, and, because it will never be shown on commercial television, is frequently rereleased, though its most recent releases have been trimmed of some violence for the sake of an R rating. That success has backfired somewhat, however.

"Sean and I spent two or three years after that writing and developing scripts that would have 'social import,' and got nowhere," says Craven. "Finally, I went to California and did *The Hills Have Eyes*." And, later, Cunningham also returned to horror with *Friday the 13th*.

For a time after *Last House*, Craven became a film editor once again, and a writer of cabaret comedy. His return to directing came in 1977, with *The Hills Have Eyes*.

The Hills Have Eyes is distinctly more professional in appearance than *Last House*. Shot in 35mm, it still had its share of amateur performances, but it also had early performances by Dee Wallace (of *The Howling* and Stephen Spielberg's forthcoming *E.T.)*, and Michael Berryman (later seen in *One Flew Over The Cuckoo's Nest* and *Deadly Blessing)*. The film is as simple in structure as a fairy tale. A family, out on holiday, is warned not to travel into the hills by an attendant at a broken-down gas station. They do, inevitably, travel into the hills, their car breaks down, and they encounter a family of trollish savages. The savages, cannibals by habit, start picking off family members one by one—particularly a baby valued for its tender meat. The tourist family, or what is left of them, eventually stand their ground and give back as hard as they took (and don't worry—the baby is rescued). Craven's original idea for the film, however, is not quite as simple as the movie turned

out to be.

"*The Hills Have Eyes* was originally written as a near-future drama, taking place during the 1984 presidential primaries," Craven reveals. "John Carpenter picked up on the same theme for *Escape From New York;* people are all getting out of New York because it was too terrible to exist there anymore. You have to have a passport to cross the George Washington Bridge, you have to have state passports to go from one state to another, because everyone's trying to get to the Sun Belt; so this family has decided to sneak across through the backroads, through the hills to get to California, the promised land. Like *The Grapes of Wrath* in 1984."

But the producer of the film felt that the futuristic angle wasn't necessary, and would take too much of their slender budget to put on film. Instead, the film focussed on the two warring families, one civilized, the other steeped in barbarism.

"I was very much interested in that—the mirror images of the two families, a darker side and a lighter side," Craven says. "Each family had its own integrity, its own system of values. Even the villains cried when one of theirs died, and the other family, what we called the 'white bread family,' became more and more vicious.

"A lot of people saw *Hills Have Eyes,* so I had a chance to do a television show, with Linda Blair and Carol Lawrence—the first time I worked with name stars. We had a 21-day shooting schedule, and that has since played all over the world as a theatrical feature."

Stranger In The House, the TV-movie known in Europe as *Summer of Fear,* starred Linda Blair as a young schoolgirl whose life is just about perfect—she has loving parents, a cute boyfriend, and a dynamite show-horse. But a serpent enters Blair's Eden when her orphaned cousin comes to live with the family. Blair soon begins to suspect that her cousin is a disguised witch, but no one believes her, no matter how much evidence she has to prove her case. The witch casts her spell on Blair's horse, her boyfriend, and even her father (with the suggestion of incest), until Blair faces the unmasked witch in a final confrontation.

Stranger In The House was Craven's first experience in working with someone else's screenplay, though it was subject to heavy, uncredited Craven rewrites. Craven did, however, take a credit for his rewrite on the next project brought to him by *Stranger's* producer.

"Max Keller of Interplanetary Productions owned a property called *Deadly Blessing.* It was really sort of reminiscent of *Charlie's Angels,* with three girls in the country, one of them married to an Amish fellow who was murdered in the first act. The two girlfriends come to stay with her, more murders happen, and they solve the crime and survive the picture. I did a one-week rewrite on it, as a favor to Max."

The script for *Deadly Blessing* then floated around Hollywood for about a year, looking for a studio; Craven meanwhile became involved in the *Swamp Thing* script—his first film as writer-director since *The Hills Have Eyes.* But when *Swamp Thing* met with several delays early in preproduction, Craven took on *Deadly Blessing.*

On the *Swamp Thing* set, Craven didn't seem ready to speak in any great detail about the film, seeming content at the time to allow the film to speak for itself.

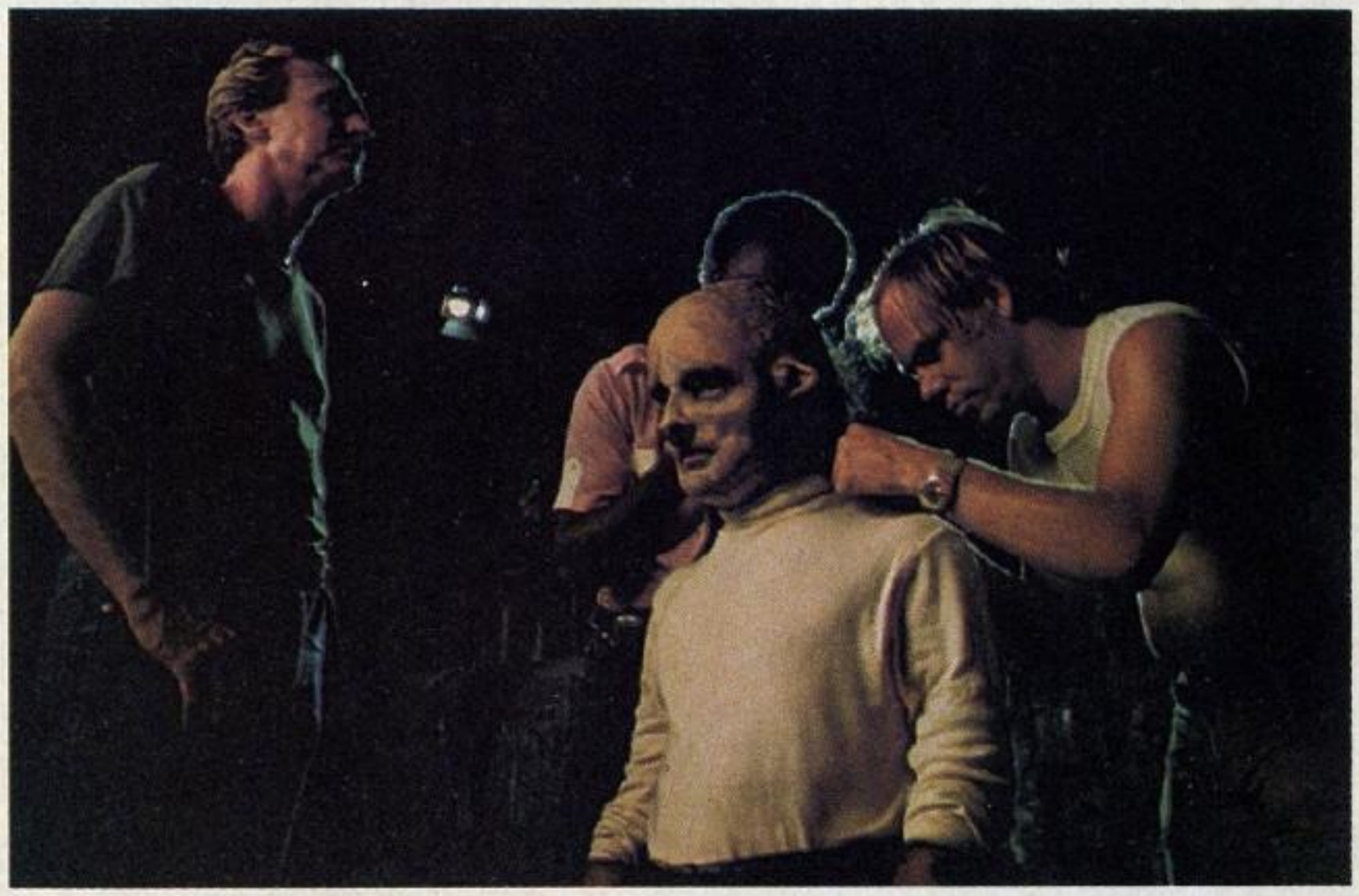


PHOTO: © 1982 SWAMP FILMS

Craven directs his stalwart crew at top, then observes the work of Bill Munn's makeup crew, as they prepare Bruno the mouse.

When we saw the film, it was clearly not the fulfillment of Craven's promise as a director, so amply displayed in *The Hills Have Eyes.* Craven had been correct in pointing out that he had made the film's $3 million budget (rock bottom these days for a studio-financed union-crew picture) look like twice that; and particular sequences, like one character's death-by-fire, and another's bathtub encounter with a deadly snake, were written and staged with flair. But the story had definite problems.

Contacting Craven again, after we had seen the picture, he was more than cordial in discussing the picture's story weaknesses with us. "The original problem with it was that, when I originally got involved with it in the re-

writes, they already had an incredibly complex story," says Craven. "Suspects everywhere, scenes casting suspicion on the girls from out of town, and many more scenes with the Hittites creating more Hittite suspects. Many more scenes than were needed for a film that was never intended to study the differing lifestyles of the people involved; it was really just setting out to scare people. In rewriting it, I tried to simplify it somewhat, and went back and added scenes that would liven up the long scenes of exposition. But the flaw that I saw upon finishing it, which I think everybody sees in the picture, is that, while individual scenes work well, and it's well-acted, the story as a whole just sort of clunks along."

Craven also told us that the ending—involving a two-sexed creature seemingly inspired by the film *Demon* (also known as *God Told Me To*)—was part of the original script, and was considered 'the mind-blower of all time' by the film's producers.

With *Swamp Thing* completed, Craven now has two projects in preparation, either of which may prove to be his next picture. One of these could be his true return to the horror genre, *Nightmare on Elm Street*. "I've just finished the script," says Craven, "and it's now in the hands of my agent, and I'm waiting to see what happens. I really like it, it's a very strong, simple, straightforward script; and it's the first script I've ever done that I've owned myself. In the past, I've always been commissioned by people to do things, one right after another, or rewriting people's scripts, or asked to base a script on other material. I'm more interested in solving my own problems than in solving somebody else's. *Deadly Blessing*, for instance, had a lot of problems that I didn't cause, storywise."

Nightmare on Elm Street concerns a group of teenaged girls whose lives are invaded by their dreams, and in particular one girl who is convinced that, if she should sleep, her nightmare will kill her. "I'm interested in films that go down beneath the surface of sanity, into the world of nightmare," Craven says, and his past work confirms this. One of the supreme moments of *Last House On The Left* occurs in the nightmare of Weasel, played by David Hess, when he dreams that the parents of a murdered girl, dressed in surgical cap and gown, have come to take painful vengeance; in *Stranger In The House*, a sense of dreamlike helplessness makes Linda Blair's situation particularly nerve-wracking; and, in *Deadly Blessing*, the stand-out scenes work as mini-nightmares.

Advance screenings have been held for *Swamp Thing*, and, though we haven't yet seen it, word has reached us that the film is best suited for a very young audience. Craven's other project would take him even further along as a director of films for this audience; it's a project now being considered by the Walt Disney Studios called *Circus Gang*. "It's, again, my own idea, a comedy-drama concerning a group of circus-performer kids who solve a crime in a rag-tag-army sort of way, using their circus skills, at the same time coming to terms with life."

Which of these projects comes before the camera first depends entirely on the studios involved, though Craven indicates that he'll be delighted to see both films made, eventually.

Just a few hours after the wind-up of our conversation with Craven, we were on a jet, winging our way back to New York—away from the world of movie sets and movie stars, and back to the workaday typewriter. As we contemplated the coming deadlines and last-minute page corrections ahead of us, we began to wonder—was there some way to get ourselves invited to the set of *Creepshow*?

PHOTO: © 1982 SWAMP FILMS

Both Arcane and Dr. Alec Holland have been zapped into strangeness by the bio-restorative formula.

Young & Independent

Coming attractions from a new breed of filmmakers!

By Ellen Carlomagno & Bob Martin

Film schools are disgorging would-be filmmakers by the thousands every year, while more and more super-8 hobbyists are honing their skills to a professional edge, anticipating their first theatrical feature. Meanwhile, in a shrinking economy, the studios are becoming more and more cautious. Fewer films are being made, with ever-increasing budgets. A young Hollywood newcomer has nothing if he doesn't have a track record, a background in film that proves that he or she can be trusted with the responsibility of spending at least 3 million dollars, with a fair chance of bringing back a hit. So what's a new filmmaker to do?

The answer, truer today than ever, is "do it yourself." Guided by such examples as *Texas Chainsaw Massacre, Night of the Living Dead* and *Rabid,* filmmakers who see themselves as the next generation's answer to Hooper, Romero, Cronenberg et. al. are busily writing their own treatments and scripts, arranging their own financing, shooting their own films, and shopping for their own distributor deals.

It's an exciting prospect, but not entirely a bed of roses, though it's got plenty of thorns. For one thing, these young independents are often forced to put their own savings on the line, as well as their own hard work and the good faith of their investors. For another, few of the young independents can afford to make their films in 35mm. As a result, even the exceptional films are often deemed by the distributors to be suitable only for grindhouses, and there even the best can be lost amid the constant flow of schlock imports and anything-for-a-buck exploitationers. And even when such a film does get discovered by the world-at-large, it's seldom that a distributor deal allows the filmmaker any significant share in the profits—many such first-time filmmakers never even get to know just how profitable their film proved to be!

But there is one wonderful thing about it all; the fact that, in order to put up with such crazy odds against them, these young independents have to truly love their work. In this article—which we hope may become the first of a series—we'll take a brief look at three of the current independent ventures that could become the low-budget classics of tomorrow!

Pranks

Of the films we'll be examining, the closest to actual release is *Pranks,* the product of a fledgling concern called Jeff Obrow Productions. When it all started, less than a year ago, the principal crewmembers were school friends, all recent graduates or senior students at the film division of the University of California in Los Angeles. Faced with the prospect of scrambling for work, and possibly not finding it, Jeff Obrow (producer, co-director, co-writer), Steve Carpenter (co-director, director

PHOTOS: © 1982 JEFF OBROW PRODUCTIONS

Top: Only the head is David Snow's in his convincing portrayal of a mutilated corpse. Above: Mungle's helping hand for the presentation reel.

of photography) and Stacey Giachino (associate producer, co-writer), took it upon themselves to launch their own film project, and create their own career beginnings.

All three collaborated on the script, which took a total of three months to write. Originally conceived under the title *Death Dorm*, *Pranks* is the story of five college students who volunteer to close down a dilapidated seven-story dormitory during their Christmas break. The horror ensues when the group realizes that they are not alone—and that the unknown interloper seems to hold more than a bit of contempt for each of them.

What makes this different from the general run of mad-slasher films? you may ask, and the answer is difficult to convey in words. Obrow and company were kind enough to screen it for us, and the results are exceptional; it effectively conveys the isolated helplessness of its characters, producing an immediacy that is further heightened by the extensive use of point-of-view shots. Quite correctly, producer and co-director Obrow points out that "it's the type of film where the audience is constantly putting themselves in the place of the characters, wondering what they would do next.

"We didn't want to be at the end of the horror film push," Obrow continues, "but we really didn't want to come after it, either, so we moved quickly." The picture took only eight months to complete, from conception to post-production, and was brought in on time and under budget.

For the special effects, however, the team had decided that no reasonable expense should be spared. "We didn't want somebody just to sling ketchup for us," smiles Obrow. "The effects are almost the most important part of this film, so we wanted somebody good." In order to find "somebody good" who was affordable on their budget, the group contacted the Joe Blasco Make-up Center in Hollywood.

Blasco, who has the horrific effects of Cronenberg's *Shivers* to his credit, and is currently in charge of makeup for Universal's TV series *Darkroom*, recommended another young up-and-comer, Matthew Mungle, to the group. Mungle, 24, a former instructor at the Blasco Center, created some wonderfully ghastly effects for the film. "I had never done anything quite so gruesome," says Mungle, "but it was really fun, and I'm happy with what I did for them." The Obrow group credits Mungle not only with excellent prosthetic and effects work, but also with keeping a firm hand and imaginative eye on the film's budget. For example, in a scene that called for a body with most of its limbs severed, Mungle realized that the conventional solution—a full body cast—would cost

John Dods created this horrific spawn which rears its heads in darkest NJ.

both time and money. At Mungle's suggestion, they used prosthetics and makeup in order to turn their actor into a dismembered corpse, a solution that worked quite well thanks to the skill of Mungle and the photography of Steve Carpenter.

Once they had found their effects man, the group made a three-minute promotional trailer, packed with startling effects by Mungle, that they presented, along with their projected budget, to their 10 prospective backers—doctors, lawyers, and businessmen—who wanted to invest in a motion picture. Obrow and the investors formed a limited partnership, and things began to roll. "They gave us full support, and just let us run with it," says Obrow of this group.

"The crew was really great," says Steve. "Everyone got along very well, and it all went smoothly."

"When everyone believes in a project as we all did, you know it's going to work out," Obrow adds. "So many of us had jobs, and we all had to make extraordinary efforts to work things into our schedules, but everyone gave their all. It's so very hard to single anyone out in a situation like this, but our lead actors, Laura Lapinski and Stephen Sachs, really made a superhuman effort."

Shortly before this issue was to go to press, Obrow and Carpenter were able to call us with further good news about the production. After negotiating with several distributors, Obrow Productions has signed a deal with a distributor, New Image Releasing, with the film's first release dates planned for late February/early March. In keeping with their name, New Image is a young company that seems prepared to take bold steps in support of their filmmakers. "As part of the deal, we've arranged for mutual consent prior to any further cutting of the film," says Obrow, indicating that the film's last hurdle will be the ratings board. "Because the effects are so strong, and because it's so very realistic, that may be a count against it. But because of the quality of the film, we don't expect them to request the removal of more than a few frames; and we're hoping they'll allow us to release *Pranks* totally intact."

In which case, expect a major shock-wave to hit your neighborhood theater—hopefully, the first of many from this talented trio.

The Deadly Spawn

All you film history buffs know where the infant movie industry had its start—in the land of Bruce Springsteen, good old New Jersey! If Ted Bohus (a long-time supporter of SF, horror, fantasy and various combinations of the three) has his way, this much-maligned state will soon be raised again to its former glory, as the state where *The Deadly Spawn* was filmed.

Bohus feels that the major problem with modestly-budgeted films these days can be summed up in a single

(Continued on Page 46)

Ashley Blythe consumed by a crew of voracious spawn.

Herschell Gordon Lewis Today

The original godfather of gore!

By Bill Landis

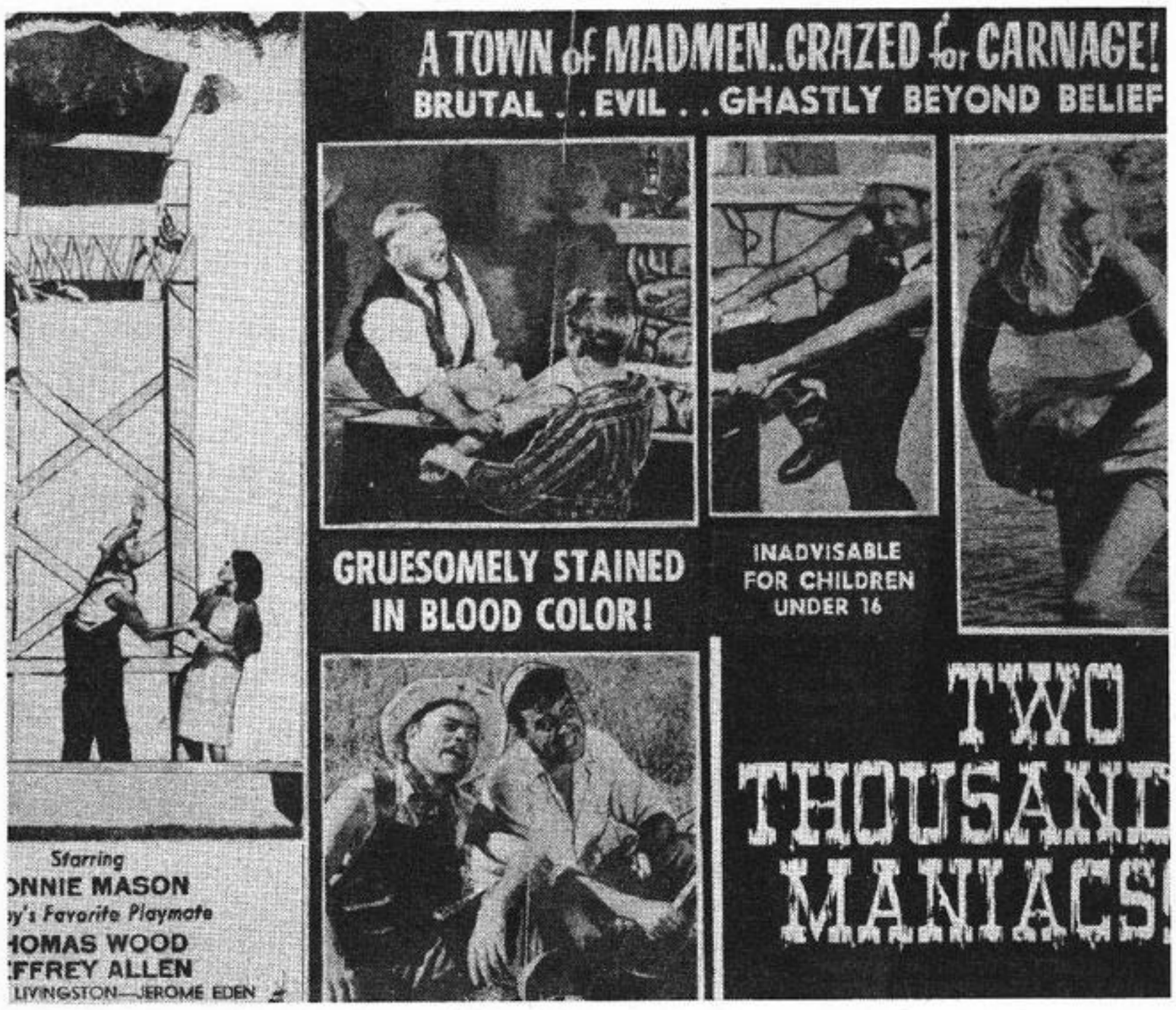
Editor's Note: Back in FANGORIA 4, we introduced our readers to the "Wizard of Gore," Mr. Herschell Gordon Lewis, in an interview piece written by Randy Palmer. It was not, however, a totally new article; it was based upon an interview Randy had conducted with Lewis in the mid-70's, and part of the piece had appeared, in a somewhat different form, in the dear departed Monster Times. *Of course, we would have preferred a fresh view of the exploitation pioneer, but we hadn't a single clue to his present whereabouts.*

We don't think we're boasting when we say that it seems that Randy's article provoked new interest in the works of Lewis, and in his present whereabouts. At one point, fueled by an item in Film Comment, *rumors began to fly that Lewis was languishing in a southern jail, due to charges relating to sales of a gas-saving device, and a shoestring-budget rent-a-car agency.*

As if to put the lie to the rumors, Lewis reappeared not long after the rumors first started to circulate, first through a brief interview with filmmaker John Waters in his book Shock Value, *then through an in-person appearance in New York at a screening of* The Wizard of Gore, *and now, in these pages. On all three occasions, Lewis denied ever having set foot in jail, though he does confess to making some bad business judgements, all settled in court and now ancient history.*

And unless Lewis' detractors come up with the straight evidence to contradict his statements, we're with him all the way. When we met Lewis, he was looking tanned and fit–no jailhouse pallor, and, though in his fifties, he fairly radiated with enthusiasm and energy.

The following interview was conducted in late 1981 by Bill Landis, New York's best-known authority on horror and exploitation films. Subscriptions to Sleazoid Express *are available in the U.S. for $8 per year from Bill Landis, Box 799, Peter Stuyvesant Station, New York, NY 10009 (Inquire for foreign rates).*



FANGORIA: How did you get started in films?

H.G. LEWIS: Some years ago, I was in the film business but making commercials and business films and somebody said to me, "How do you make any money in your business?" I said, 'The only way to make any money in the film business is to make features." So he said, "Why don't you make features?" I had no particularly logical answer for that question. So I started making features. The first film I made was *The Prime Time* in glorious black and white. I got a job as a freelance film director. I came into the feature film business knowing full well how to load a Mitchell camera; there were no terrors for me in the production end. I could sync up an out of sync sequence. I could make a dissolve with clorox bleach.

Fang: Around this time, you were involved in *Lucky Pierre,* the first "nudie" after Russ Meyer's *Immoral Mr. Teas.*

Lewis: Yes, but, you see, *Mr. Teas* was in 16mm. This was about the first 35mm picture of its type and in that respect I suppose it had a pioneer overtone. Many of the things we did had a pioneer overtone. We used absolutely every foot of film that went through the camera in *Lucky Pierre*. I was the director and cameraman and Dave Friedman was the producer and soundman. This picture made back its negative cost in one engagement. Suddenly, we were in the business with both feet. We then shot *Daughters of the Sun,* a nudist camp feature, in Florida. Those pictures were literally smashes. But we felt the industry was moving out of nudist camp pictures. The question when you are making exploitation pictures is, "What kind of picture can you shoot that the major film companies can't or won't?" We settled on gore. And that became something we literally just invented.

Fang: I just saw *Blood Feast* and it blew me away.

Lewis: Unbelievable, because that's our very first one. That's in 1963.

Fang: I must admit it's also pretty funny.

Lewis: Certainly. Well, we laughed a lot while making it. We laughed much harder when we checked drive in theaters and there were cars backed up down the highway. That's the sort of thing you laugh at very happily. *Blood Feast* was the first picture of its type. I've often compared it with a Walt Whitman poem—it's no good but it's the first.

Fang: Whatever happened to Mal Arnold, who played the mad Egyptian caterer, Fuad Ramses? He was hilarious.

Lewis: I don't know what happened to him. Mal Arnold was simply a Miami actor who appeared and disappeared. Our headquarters in Miami Beach was the Suez motel. One night (for the scene in which a girl's brains are ripped out) the owner said, "Hey, are you shooting tonight?" We said, "Yes." He said, "Well, we always have entertainment for our guests, would you mind if they watched?" "No, if they won't get in the way." So we were the entertainment and boy were they out. That place was crawling with people. We shot *Blood Feast* in six days. Dave came across somebody at the Miami Playboy Club and her part was to have her tongue ripped out. This scene is, by the way, I think, the best gore scene in that film. Astrid Olsen was her name and she spoke with a thick Scandinavian accent. I recall saying to her, "Miss Olsen, the fellow may get kind of rough with you" and she said, "Oh, I like a man who is rough." She showed up with her boyfriend for this rather peculiar scene. Anyway, we got her in this room and we stuffed this sheep's tongue in her mouth which was pretty raunchy by this time. It really stank. So we stuffed that thing in her mouth with some cranberries and our stage blood which we just developed for that picture. We went down to a place in Coral Gables called Barfred Laboratories for it . . . We didn't know what we had there. People who would see stuff on the moviola would get sick. No one had ever made one of these things before.

"Take my knife—please!" Henny Youngman in *Blood Feast*.

There was no rating system at the time. There were individual censor bureaus, and if we made *Lucky Pierre* today we'd probably get a PG. That's why there's an ongoing argument about whether movies are creators, reflectors or followers of public morality. That's one which, perhaps, wiser heads will have to answer.

Fang: *Blood Feast* is the most extreme movie in the gore trilogy.

Lewis: Yes, the gore is more pronounced. In terms of nudity, you can't see anything; the camera placement is quite careful. That didn't come into it until we shot pictures like *The Gore Gore Girls*. *Blood Feast* opened and it was a colossal smash. The only picture I made that could compare to its box office success was *She Devils on Wheels*.

Fang: What about the next in the trilogy, *2000 Maniacs*?

Lewis: We went down to shoot that in Orlando, where Disneyworld is now, actually in a town called St. Cloud. We literally took over the town of St. Cloud for the shooting of that picture. It's the one picture that we really took pains with.

Fang: It shows.

Lewis: I think it does, too. I had good acting, good photography.

Fang: It looks like much more than $28,000.

Lewis: In fact, at one point when we talked to a big distribution company, which didn't materialize . . . We were very gun-shy, faced with pictures like *Bayou* which had been *murdered* by distributors.

Fang: *Bayou* was originally distributed by United Artists, but eventually rereleased as *Poor White Trash*.

Lewis: That's the one. Everybody thinks that was murdered by UA because the producer never got a dime of film rental out of that thing until he took it back and released it himself.

We claimed a $400,000 cost for *2000 Maniacs* because we felt they would not respect anything less, and they took it very matter of factly. That picture has tremendous production values, shots from cherry pickers high in the air, lots of motion, a travelling camera. We really extended ourselves; audiences would go to pieces on that film. With *Blood Feast* we shocked 'em. I remember Charlie Cooper, who owned the Englewood theater in Chicago, which was in a ghetto neighborhood, showed *Blood Feast* and his report was, "There's these guys slashing the seats and shooting bullet holes at the screen but then up comes that tongue scene and all you see is a bunch of white eyeballs."

Gore movies weren't particularly chic in our day. After we shot *Blood Feast*, we shot *2000 Maniacs*, which was a *good* picture and these censor boards were just laying for us. We had caught 'em by surprise with the first one.

Fang: So *2000 Maniacs* didn't do as well as *Blood Feast*.

Lewis: No, I don't think *Star Wars* did as well as *Blood Feast*.

Fang: How much money did *Blood Feast* make?

Lewis: I'll never know. The reason why I'll never know is that we had four partners on the film. One of them, Stan Kolberg, held the funds and was sued. We never did get a final accounting on that picture.

Fang: Is your other smash hit, *She Devils on Wheels*, pretty violent?

Lewis: *She Devils on Wheels* is pretty violent and not a bad picture.

Fang: Is it very sexually oriented?

Lewis: There are suggestive things there, just as there are suggestive things in *Suburban Roulette*. That's a picture which, again, is considered pretty racy, but which, today, would be a PG, positively. There was *no* nudity in it. There's no nudity in *She Devils on*

A Guide to Lewis

Due to various factors, most of Lewis' films are extremely difficult, or impossible to see today, more heard about than seen. Therefore, we present the following summaries of the basic premise of each of Lewis' horror films. The first three on the list, which were produced by David Friedman, form what has become known as the Lewis "Gore Trilogy."

Blood Feast (1963): Fuad Ramses, a demented Egyptian caterer, decides to bring an ancient goddess to life by sacrificing the various parts of women he violently murders.
2000 Maniacs (1964): A group of Northerners are brutally murdered by the ghostly inhabitants of a small Southern town.
Color Me Blood Red (1965): A mad artist finds that blood from his models is absolutely necessary for making paint that is the perfect shade of red.
A Taste Of Blood (1967): A modern-day vampire story set in Florida, with H.G. Lewis-style effects.
Something Weird (1968): After being horribly disfigured by burns from a high-tension wire, a man acquires ESP and telekinetic powers, and becomes involved with a witch.
The Gruesome Twosome (1968): An imbecilic young man pleases his wigmaking mother by scalping young women.
The Wizard of Gore (1970): Montag the Magician performs wonders before your eyes—sawing women in half, drilling through them with chainsaws. But it's all an illusion of course—isn't it?
The Gore Gore Girls (a.k.a. Blood Orgy, 1972): The employees of a strip joint owned by Henny Youngman are brutally murdered one by one.

Wheels. There's a lot of action, there's a lot of gore, but there's no nudity.

Fang: Do you think that film was successful because around the time of its release (1968) AIP was releasing a lot of youth movies and biker films?

Lewis: As a matter of fact, we had AIP's *Born Losers* at the bottom half of our double bill all over the country. There was no question what the exhibitors felt, because *Born Losers* was coming in at $100 flat and we were getting the percentage. We had what nobody had before—they had women in these pictures, they always claimed "women, women, women," but the woman was sitting on the *back* of the bike, the *guy* was driving. We had nothing but women who could handle a big Harley or a Norton or a BMW. These were rough, tough-looking women. It was violence rather than sex. The overtone of sex is always there because sex and violence tend to work together in exploitation pictures.

Fang: *Color Me Blood Red* is the mildest of your gore trilogy.

Lewis: *Color Me Blood Red,* that's about the painter . . .

Fang: It's pretty funny.

Lewis: It is. In fact, the effects are not as good. We didn't have our hearts in that quite the same way. We shot it in Sarasota. The picture did all right, but it was no *2000 Maniacs*. I wouldn't call that one of our major pictures. Now, *The Gruesome Twosome*, on the other hand . . .

Fang: That's about the wig shop and the scalpings.

Lewis: That had some tremendous effects in it. It's about a little old woman who runs a wig shop. And her idiot son who lives in the basement gives her the makings to make these wigs. On one side of the house she has rooms for rent and on the other side of the house she has wigs for sale. All these young girls, naturally, come in, rent a room and are promptly scalped by the idiot son, and the wigs are made. We had some very nice effects in there where he simply . . . Well, one day, she says, "you've been a good boy. Now mother has a gift for you, an electric knife." So he's slobbering around, dripping saliva, and takes this electric knife and the next girl who comes in he simply cuts her right across the throat with the electric knife and the blood just spurts all over the place. In fact, we had somebody blowing on a tube to get the stage blood out and I was yelling "blow harder!" and he literally burst the tube and the stage blood came all over the camera—and that stuff was *hard* to get off.

We used our own blood formula—after experimenting with different things, we started using Kaopectate as a base. It was great blood, but it stained everything it touched. When we were shooting *She Devils On Wheels,* we had one scene where a head, covered in glop and stage blood, goes flying in the air; our cameraman kept goofing the shot. He was lying down, shooting up and was too concerned about the head landing on him to get the shot. I took over the camera. The head went up beautifully, but it landed right on my crotch, and I was wearing a brand new pair of white Levis. I was furious when I couldn't get it out—I tried bleach, I tried absolutely everything. One day, in desperation, I dipped it in Axion, which had just come out on the market, and the stain vanished in one second—that was before they took the phosphates out of detergents. I would have written them a testimonial, but I wasn't sure they'd welcome one of that kind.

Fang: From *The Gruesome Twosome* on, your horror films became even more violent. One observer tells me that, at a recent play of *The Wizard of Gore* in Richmond, Virginia, the audience went nuts.

Lewis: Good for the audience! Do you mean that they began to assault each other, or that they were screaming?

Fang: They were screaming "Montag for President." (Montag is the title character.)

Lewis: (Laughing) Well, Montag is the German word for Monday—means absolutely nothing, but it sounds good. The actor originally planned to play that part didn't show up for the first day's shooting, and Ray Sager walked into the part. The thing Ray did best was drop props on the floor, he was very good at that. We used to joke about the Ray Sager Manual Dexterity Award.

Fang: He was in several of your other films; *Suburban Roulette, Just For The Hell Of It* . . .

Lewis: And he was the assistant director on *The Gore Gore Girls*. He was almost staff with us; the funny thing of it was that he was a serious actor.

Fang: You couldn't tell that from the films.

Lewis: I know, but what we did was camp; I was surprised to see that he resented some of the kidding we were doing about the films we were making, he took the craft seriously. Ray played the punk kid in *Just For The Hell Of It*, and did a very respectable job.

Fang: One of your many pseudonyms was Sheldon Seymour. Why pseudonyms at all?

Lewis: Sometimes we used Sheldon Seymour, sometimes we used Seymour Sheldon. I came to the conclusion that everybody in this business was named either Sheldon or Seymour. I figured that if we put 'em together, everybody would be able to identify with him. But the made-up names went all the way back to *Lucky Pierre,* where we had a very small crew, not even enough to make a credit list, so we made up nonsense credits like "lenses by Coca-Cola Bottling Co." Also, when your name appears too many times on a credit list, people think it's all done because of a massive ego, but that's not it at all. But it's not—when you undertake that much work, it's because you don't want to pay money to people who can't do something as well as you, even though that's the only thing they do for a living. That's why I quit hiring cameramen. We often gave the title of cameraman, but after the first day of shooting, I grabbed the camera because I found I could simply move faster with no apparent loss of quality.

Fang: *The Wizard of Gore* is one of my favorites of your films.

Lewis: The effects in that are not entirely what I'd hoped they'd be. In the climax, I wanted someone torn right down to the bone, I knew just how we'd do that effect—and we didn't do it, for a very stupid reason. We shot the scene in someone's living room, and the owner was afraid that it would bleed through our rug and plastic cover into his carpet. It was a concession that should never have been made.

Fang: *The Gore Gore Girls* is generally considered the most extreme of your films—particularly that scene where a woman's nipples are cut off, with milk spurting into champagne glasses.

Lewis: We were beginning to become parodies of ourselves by that time. It's OK not to take yourself seriously, but that can prove dangerous; you may not communicate. I decided, in doing that particular effect, that we'd *better* have *chocolate* milk coming from the second one so people would *know* it was meant as an outrageous joke. So help me, they didn't know it was a joke. Another scene that really got to people was when we put that girl's head into the boiling oil, french-fried her. That seemed to get people going a bit.

Fang: And it received an X rating.

Lewis: I fought that, by the way. I appeared before the appeals board in New York. I felt it was a disservice—not to the world in general, but to me. We had our whole campaign done, it had R all over it—I was convinced that there was nothing in that picture to justify an X. I feel what justified an X in their minds was that it was a low budget film.

Fang: The ratings board is currently being very tough on gore movies, today. Most are threatened with an X if scenes aren't cut. What do you think of the current trends in this area?

Lewis: I think they're all logical descendants of the first gallon of stage blood that we emptied out in *Blood Feast*. It's like a chain of "begats" in the Bible.

Fang: But your films are better—more fun—than the ones around today.

Lewis: I'm glad to hear you say that.

Fang: What are you doing now, for a living?

Lewis: I'm a writer. I write direct response campaigns, and I write books; I lead the good life and I sit by my pool.

Fang: Any plans to return to films?

Lewis: Hard to answer that. I still have all the equipment, but as to whether I'll put it to use . . .

Let me try to explain one of the problems I have in trying to reconcile one thing with another. I play tennis every day. I have never worked less, or made more money than I do right now. When one makes a feature film, it is brutally hard work, especially when you get involved in every facet, as I tended to do—producing, directing, camera, music, effects, whatever. Now, if I get tired of hitting the typewriter, I go sit by the pool for an hour. I cannot reconcile that lifestyle, which I've come to love, with going back to bedlam!

But the timing is good now, especially with the video cassette market, which pays back your negative costs. I just won a tennis tournament, so I suppose I can still handle a Mitchell camera, I'm not too old. But the question is whether or not it's a logical move, and it would only be logical if it were an exceptional deal, and if I could eliminate from my part of the activity dealing with some of the people who, nowadays, I have too much contempt for. This is a difficult matter to bring up but there are aspects of film distribution—for instance, trying to outguess people who might under-report a gross-figure—that I may have found challenging in the past, but would find disgusting today. But who can predict the future?

Fang: What do you think of your films being in private 16mm and video collections?

Lewis: The more people that get to them, the better off everybody is. It doesn't bother me at all. It would bother me if it was in the first two years of release; it doesn't bother me when a picture becomes venerable; after a film reaches the hoary old age that mine have, the heck with it. Let anybody who wants to have those prints or cassettes enjoy them—if someone wants to have one of my ancient films and look at it for the 37th time, and receives great pleasure from it, then that gives me great pleasure.

On WOLVES real & reel

By Ron Sadowsky

Photos by Scott Barry

Editor's note: The following letter was received from Ron for inclusion in "The Postal Zone." Because of its length and its relevance to a recent phenomenon in horror films, we decided to publish it as a brief feature.

In a way, it is film criticism of the highest nature–it does not argue the vision of the filmmakers involved, but it does relate the content of some recent fantasy films to a real-world problem. Sadowsky doesn't place the entire burden of that problem on the shoulders of the filmmakers, whose primary job is, after all, to entertain; rather, he simply urges us all to make the important distinction between film images and reality, and to see each with different eyes.

Initially, I want to qualify this letter with a statement: I am an avid fan of horror films, although I do not get to see as many as I would like, since my work leaves me little extra time. I therefore depend on FANGORIA and *Cinefantastique* to guide me to the quality productions. The topic of this letter is very similar to that of a letter that I had published in the latter magazine, but the content is quite different; I hope that you can print this, as it would be a great service to animals.

Three recent horror films concern me greatly—*The Howling, The Wolfen* and *An American Werewolf In London*. All three are excellent productions, but since the concept of lycanthropy is based upon what are believed by some to be the true habit of wolves, I would like to correct some serious misconceptions about that animal. I might first point out that these misconceptions are nothing new; the concept of lycanthropy (werewolfism) dates back many hundreds of years, when it was first employed to explain schizophrenia. The wolf was already a much-feared and misunderstood animal, a natural symbol to superstitious minds of the "bestial" behavior of people so afflicted.

Of the three films I mentioned, *The Wolfen* displayed the greatest amount of responsibility, in that it tried to relay a positive message concerning the wolf and our shared environment. In fact, one of the characters states in the movie that the series of murders depicted bore no relation to the actual behavior of wolves. I do take issue with the fact that the director used actual wolves for the filming, and is reported to have dyed them black for effect. While the American Humane Society certified the movie as acceptable in its treatment of animals—their highest rating—this constitutes, in my judgement, a serious misuse of these wolves, despite the positive nature of the film's content.

The Howling and *An American*

A ritualized dispute between Canadian timber wolves. Though they look ferocious, their expressions and actions are symbolic; neither animal was injured in this conflict.

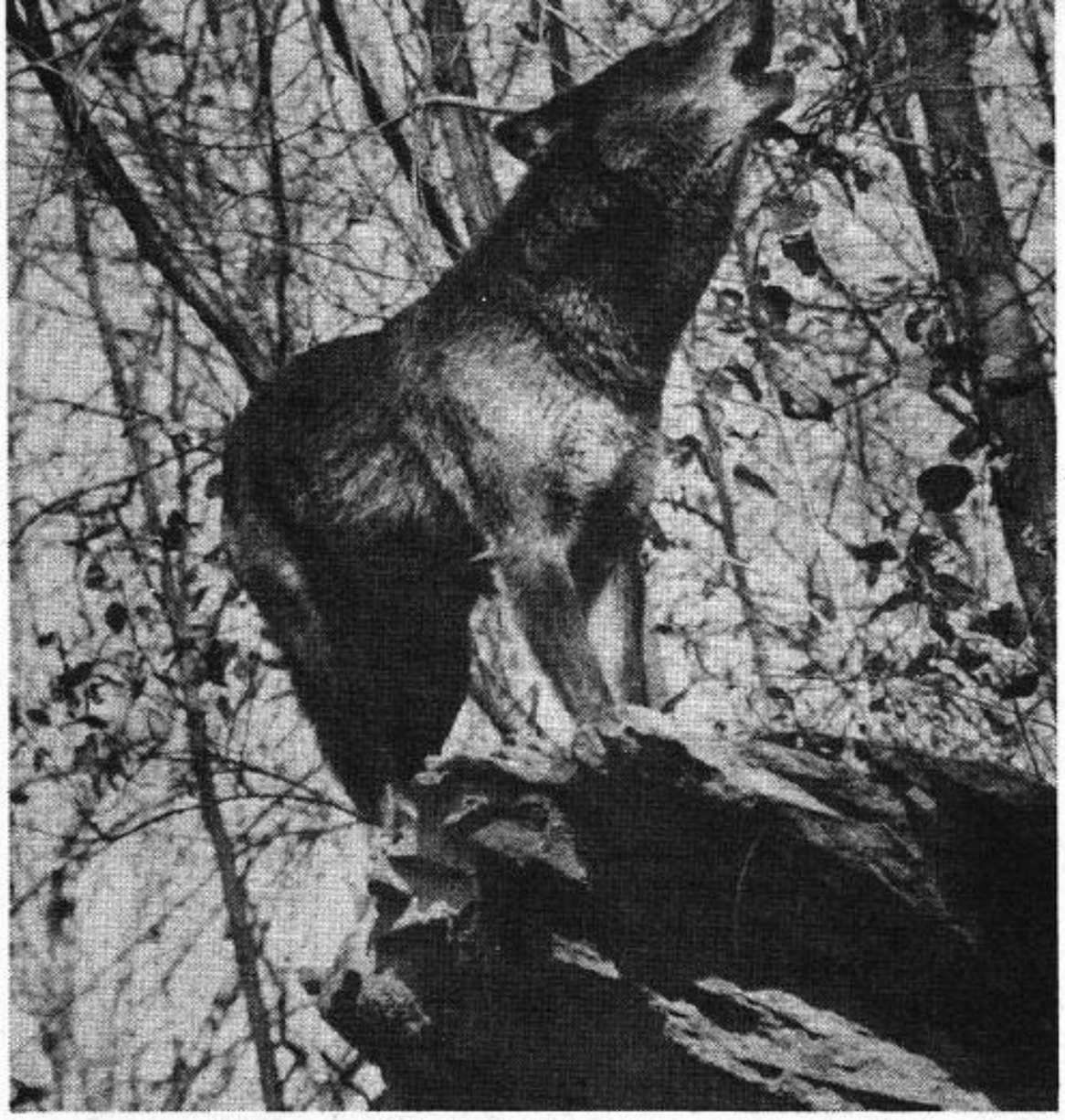
Werewolf In London did not make any positive statement, nor did they provide any disclaimer regarding the wolf. I will concern myself with *An American Werewolf,* as the most recent of the three.

An American Werewolf is a funny, poignant and horrifying film. I found it to be a perfect synthesis of these three aspects, a particularly difficult blend to achieve. The writing is excellent, the acting superb. Jenny Agutter, Griffin Dunne and David Naughton give intelligent and subtle performances, as do all the cast. I found this to be the most artistic of the three films. But a problem arises from the misconceptions that already exist concerning the wolf, and perpetuated by the film. The special effects are astounding, but the fully-transformed creature looks like a wolf—a difficult dilemma in terms of the imagery presented and the impression on the audience.

Canis Lupus (the common gray timber wolf), Canis Laterans (the coyote) and Canis Niger or Rufus (the red wolf) are magnificent animals. These majestic and timid animals have been eliminated from almost 99% of thecontinental United States. Whereas the density of the wolf used to be 17 per square mile in our northwest, they are now so few and so timid that no truly accurate projection of their numbers can be made.

The wolf is an extremely familial animal. Like many other animals, wolves live in communities consisting of father, mother, grandparents and children. Like ducks, whales and many other animals wolves are believed to be monogamous, taking a single mate for life. And, despite all myths concerning the animal's viciousness, this animal is very timid. The wolf will never approach a human in the wilderness, and kills only for food. The wolf's selection of prey tends towards the sick, the old, the weak and injured, which serves to genetically and socially strengthen whatever herd the wolf is attacking, thereby aiding the perpetuation of that species. The wolf is extraordinarily intelligent and maintains a complex and fascinating system of communication. This includes howling, barks and scents; howling is both territorial and social. Barking (including growls) is defensive, structured and direct.

But, most important in relation to all three films, there has never been a documented case of a wolf attacking a human in America. The bad reputation of the wolf, fostered by literature, media, semantics, government agencies and movies, is thoroughly erroneous. Filmmakers could do wolves and many other animals a great service by employing a modicum of responsibility, and performers could also work toward such a positive goal. An excellent film such as *An American Werewolf In London* could easily add a short disclaimer at the end of the film stating the simple truth—that the behavior of a werewolf, wolf, or any other creature in a movie does not relate in any way to the actual behavior of a given animal. This would do a great deal of good for a gentle, intelligent and majestic animal such as the wolf.



Wolves do not howl at the moon; they howl at any time of day or night, as a form of communication, social ritual and/or protest to other species; they have a wide "vocabulary" of howls, and often harmonize when howling.

Recommended Reading:

The Wolf—L. David Mech, University of Minnesota Press.
Never Cry Wolf—Farley Mowat, Bantam Books.
Of Wolves And Men—Barry Lopez, Charles Scribner's Sons.
The Kingdom of Wolves—Scott Barry, G.P. Putnam's Sons.

Ron Sadowsky is a member of the Board of Directors of the Animal Rights Coalition, Inc., Box 642, Willernie, MN 55090

Basket Case Update

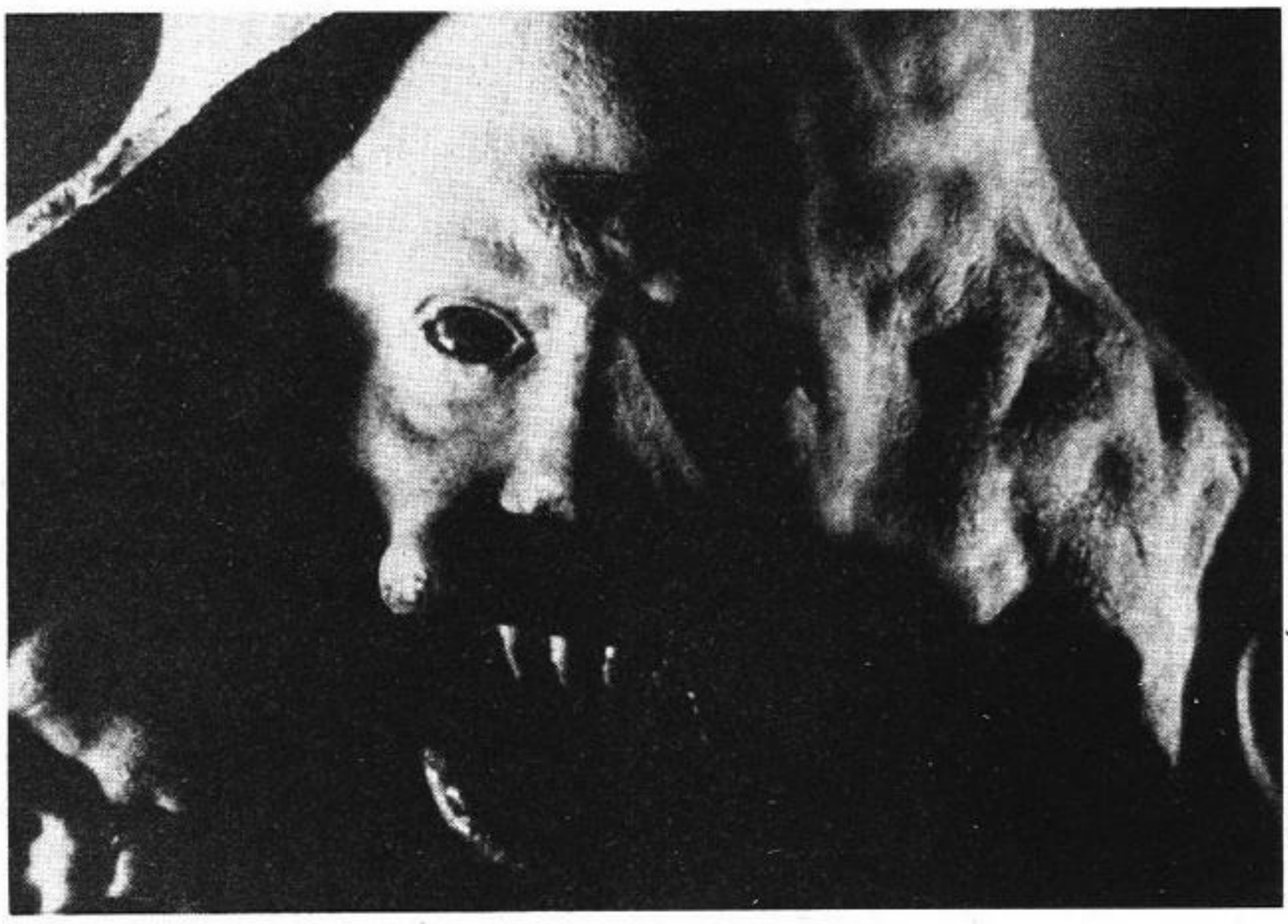
Why you won't see the movie we saw...

By Bob Martin

The first time I spoke to Frank Henenlotter, his attitude was a joyful one; after nurturing *Basket Case* through financing, preproduction, filming, editing and sound mix, after shopping it around to the New York and California independent distributors, he felt close to a deal with one of these, Analysis Releasing. Like several others, they had reacted to the film with enthusiasm—but, more important, they had immediately conceived of a definite plan for its release.

"One thing we like about Analysis is that their experience is largely with foreign and 'art' films," Henenlotter told us. "They've handled one horror film previously, *Maniac!*, and whatever you think of that film, they did handle it very well. And they had a definite approach in mind. Unless you have a really prestige film, horror films mostly just get dumped in this business; their idea was to preview it initially as a midnight show. A midnight show can help a film acquire word-of-mouth for a while, and establish an audience, instead of just opening it and hoping that word-of-mouth would find it in time to carry it through a second and third week."

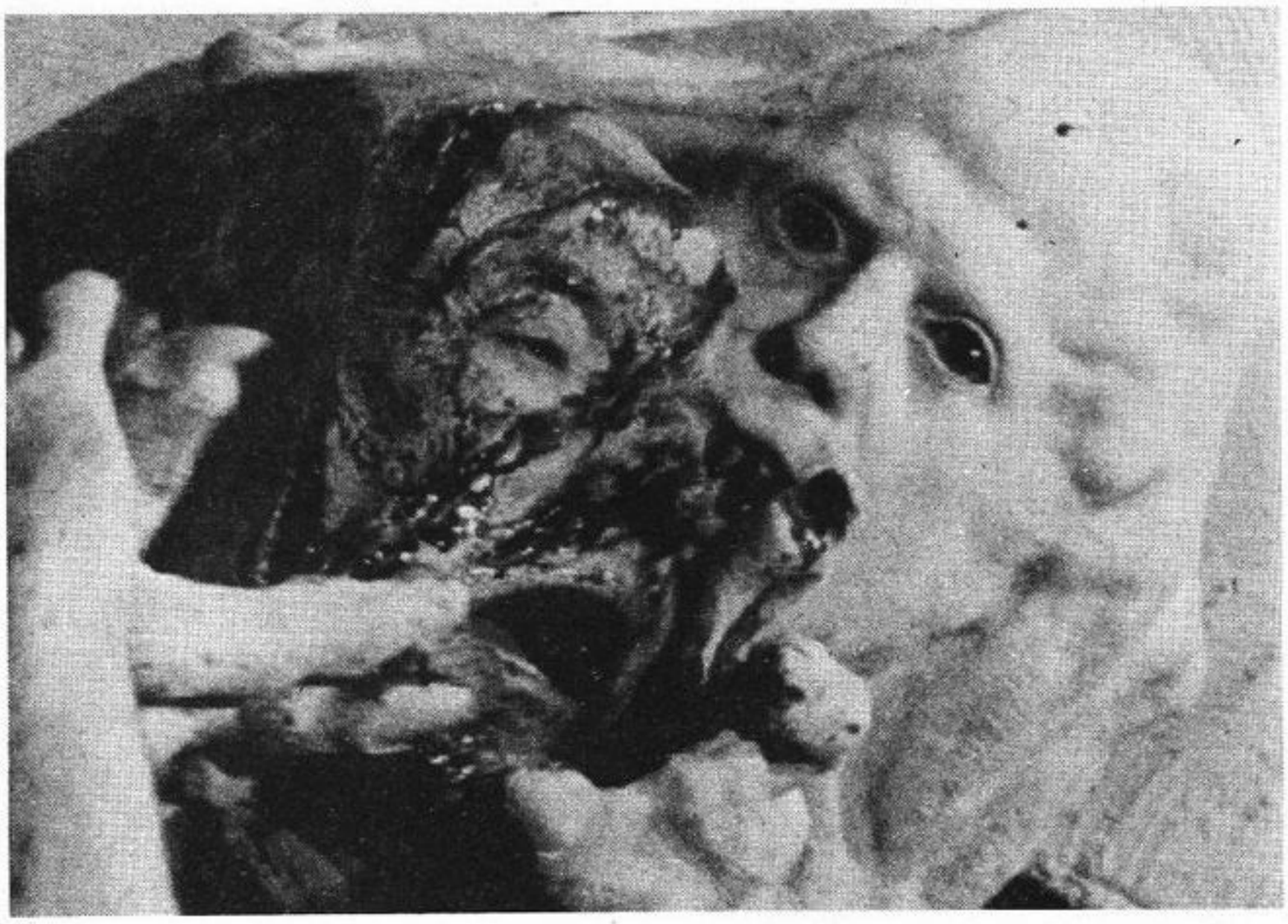
We all expected good things to happen, and, in our last issue, we promised FANGORIA's readers a follow-up on the distribution plans for *Basket Case* and the manner of its passage through the ratings hurdle.



PHOTOS: © 1982 FRANK HENENLOTTER

It's a cruel world for mishapen, misunderstood Belial . . .

But, two months later, Henenlotter seemed to have been brought back down to earth by several degrees. In an effort to reach a wider, more general audience, we had learned that *Basket Case* was being cut for violence. And the people doing the cutting were not the members of some ratings board, seeking to legislate morality. No, the cuts were being made by Analysis Releasing, the same company that released the uncut versions of the two films that sit lowest on the scale of "responsible use of film violence"—*Caligula* and *Maniac!*



. . . whose most dramatic scenes head for the cutting room floor.

Henenlotter had every reason in the world to keep silent about the actions of Analysis, or even to lie to us, and declare his delight with the job the distributor was doing. After all, the success of his first theatrical feature, and his ability to profit by it, depend on the actions of Analysis. Nevertheless, there were a few things he wanted on record for readers of FANGORIA who saw our last issue's coverage of the film, and for *Basket Case*'s future audience.

Our original intention was to speak with both the director and Analysis; however, after a week of no response to our phone messages from the distributor, we were forced to meet our deadlines with Henenlotter's words alone.

"One thing is, if any of you readers are going to go see *Basket Case* in the expectation of seeing a *bloody* horror film, don't blame me if it isn't," says the director. "Analysis reasons that they

(Continued on Page 64)

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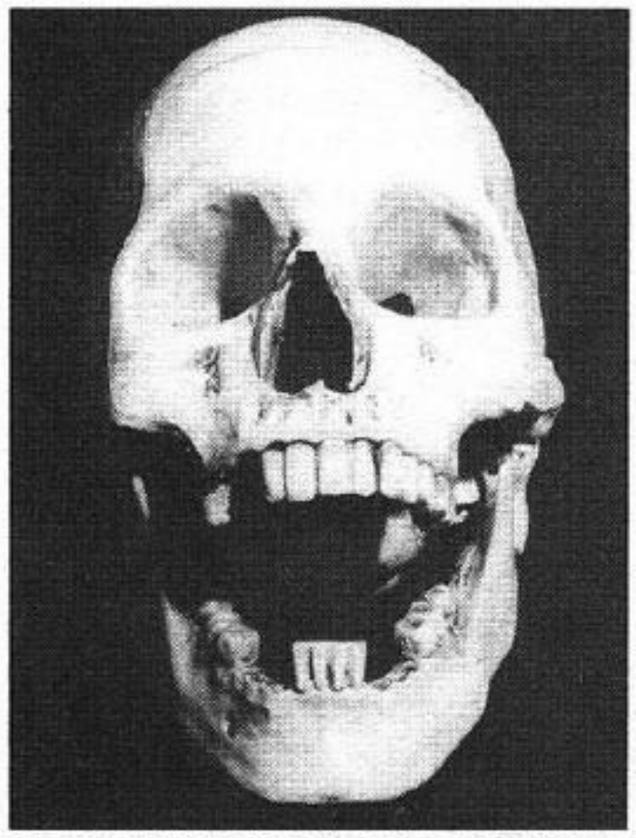

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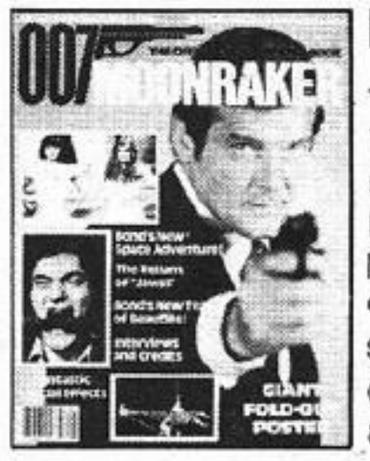

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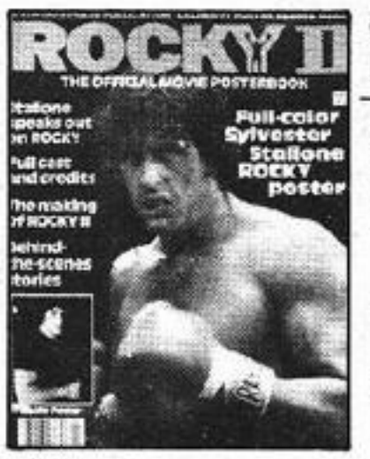

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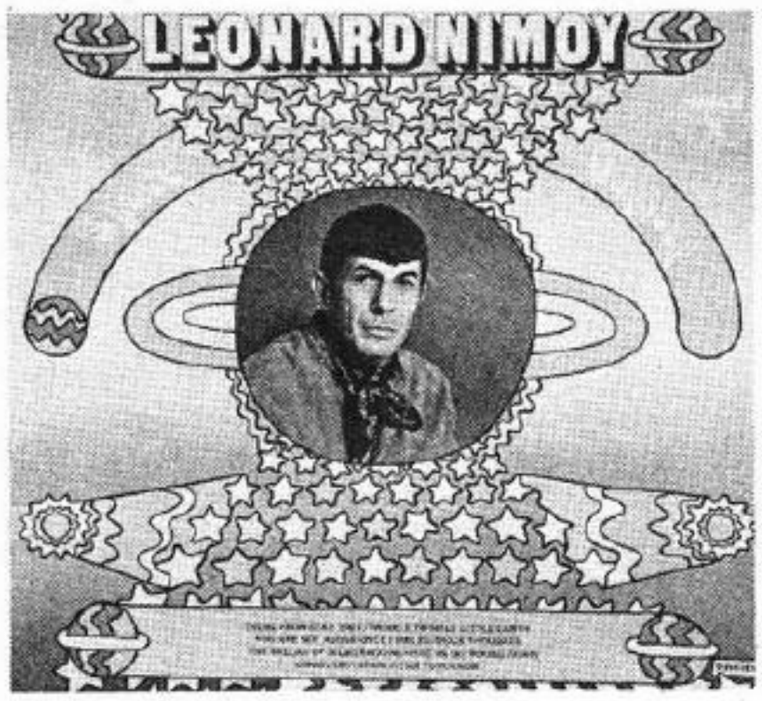

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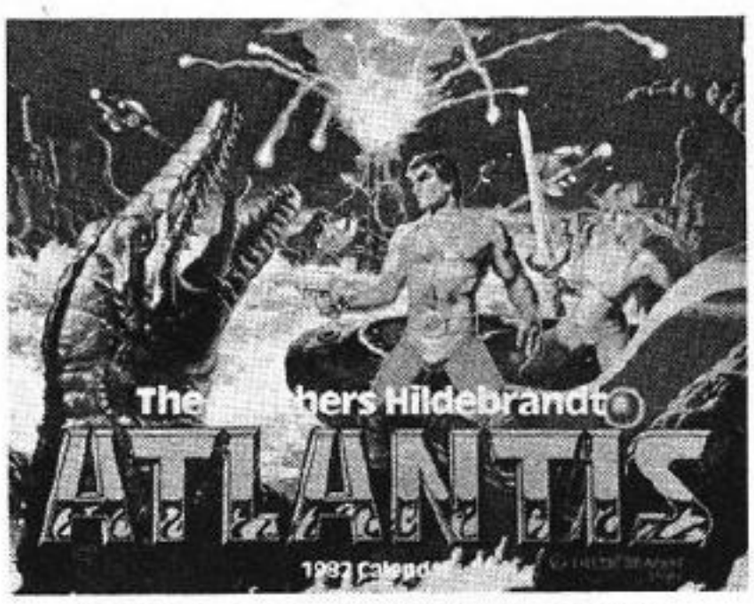

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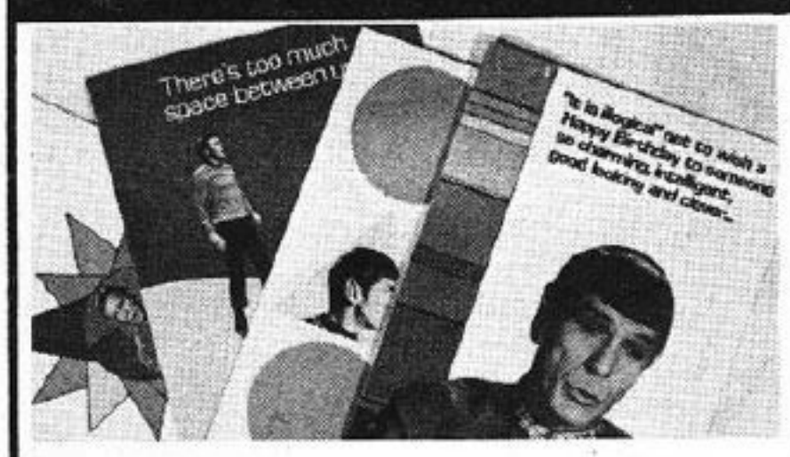

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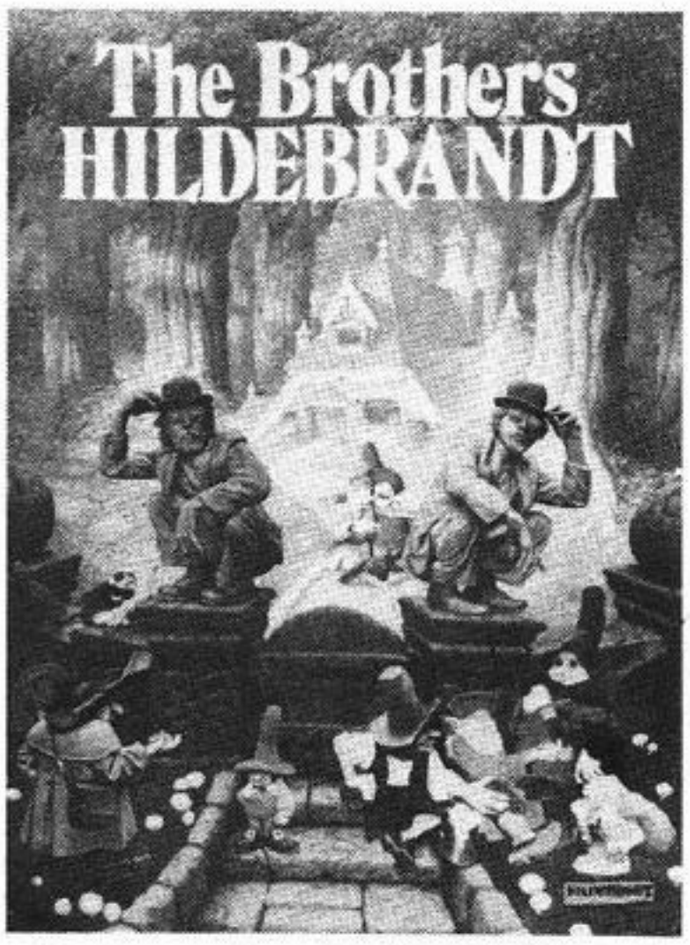

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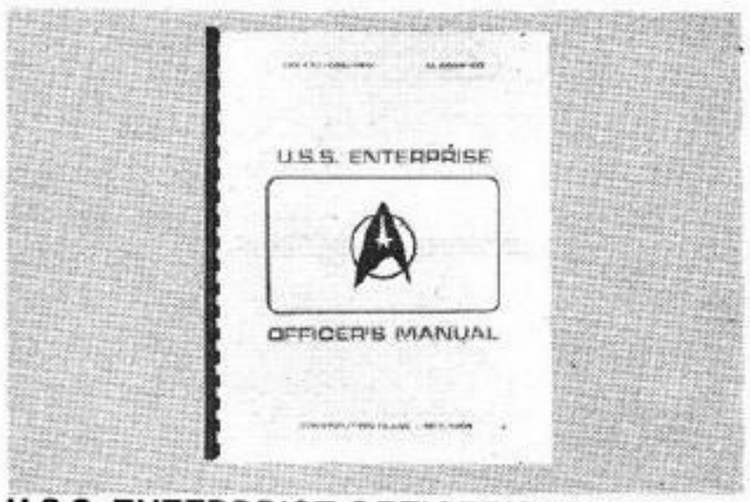

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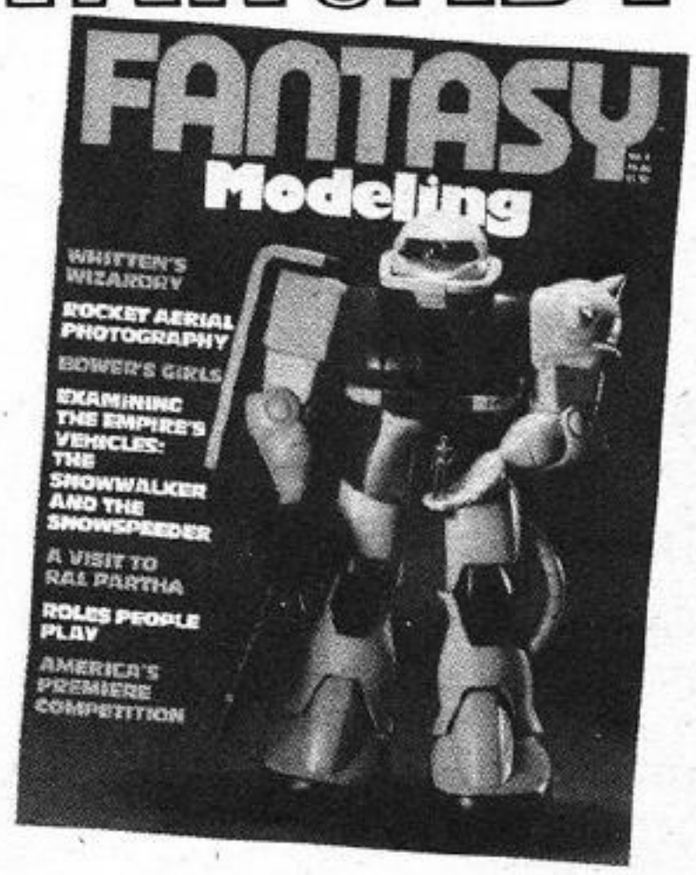

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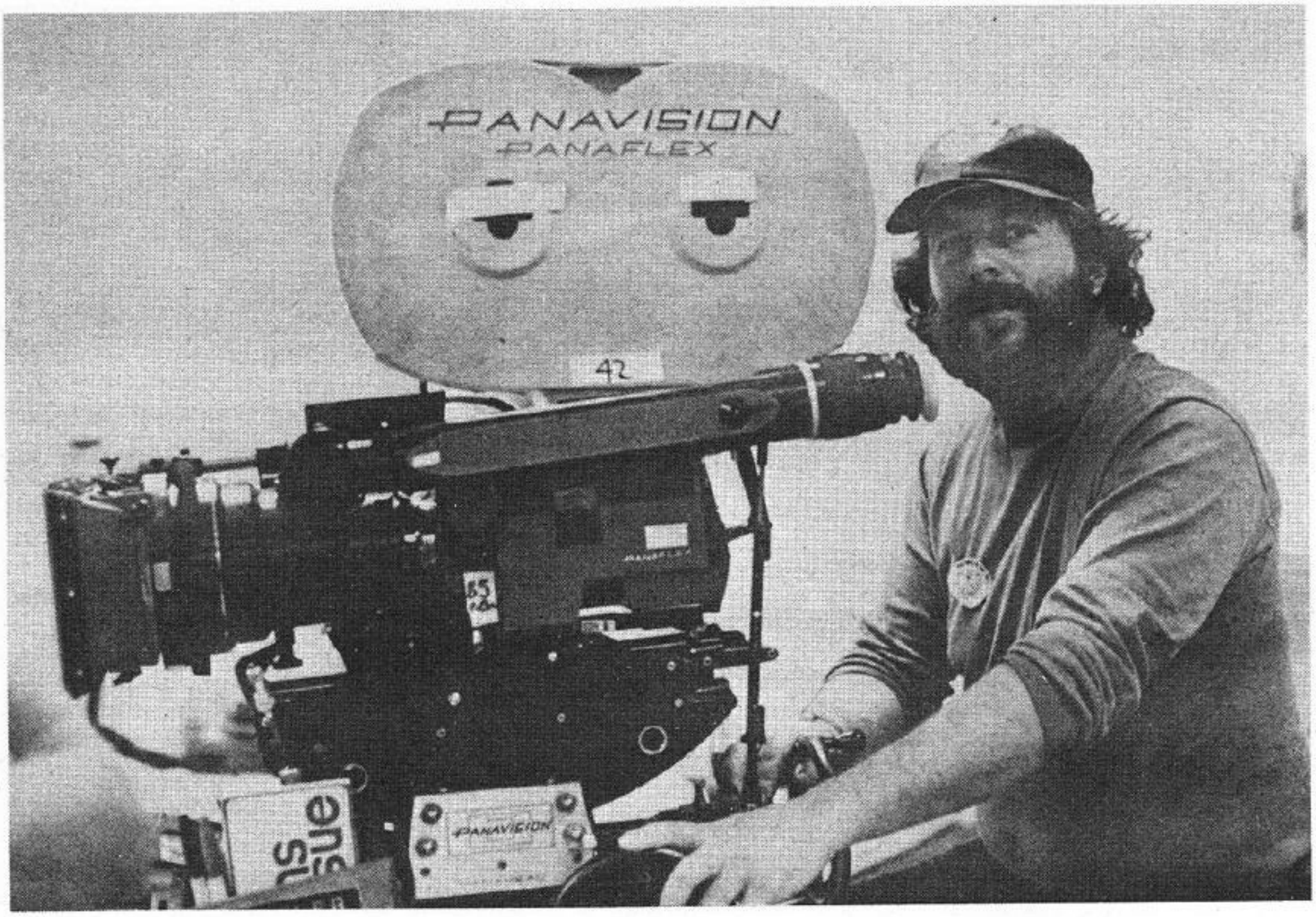
An Interview With Rick Rosenthal

Are You Ready For Ivy League Terror?

By David Everitt



PHOTOS: © 1981 Universal

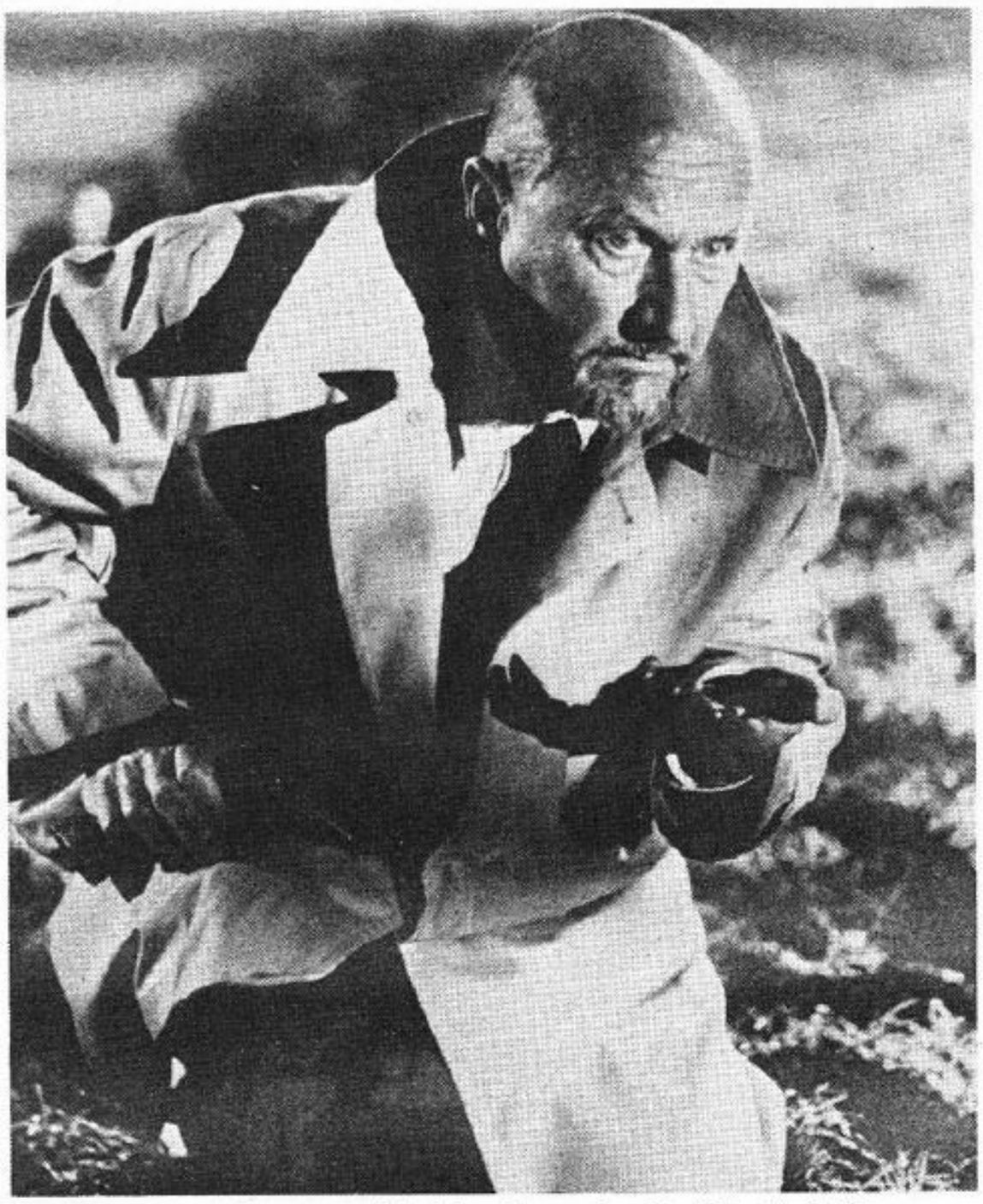
With only limited television experience and no previous feature film work, Rick Rosenthal has emerged in the past year as one of the busier practitioners of the horror film craft. Recently, he has directed *Halloween II*, several episodes of ABC's horror-suspense series *Darkroom*, and has been rumored as the director for King-Hitzig's planned 3D production of *Louisiana Swamp Murders*, all of which may sound pretty unusual for a Harvard graduate whose first interest was in the fine arts.

Rosenthal was interested in painting since he was around 14 and then, during his college years, moved on to metal sculpture. In 1969, at the age of 19, he was working as a tennis instructor in Monte Carlo between semesters at Harvard. When this job was finished, he hitch-hiked around Europe and discovered his new artistic passion while stranded in a ship-building village in Italy. He wandered about the place, looking over the half-constructed hulls, and he found that the welded structures reminded him of Alexander Calder sculptures. By the time he returned to Harvard he had decided to pursue something along these lines in the area of metal sculpture.

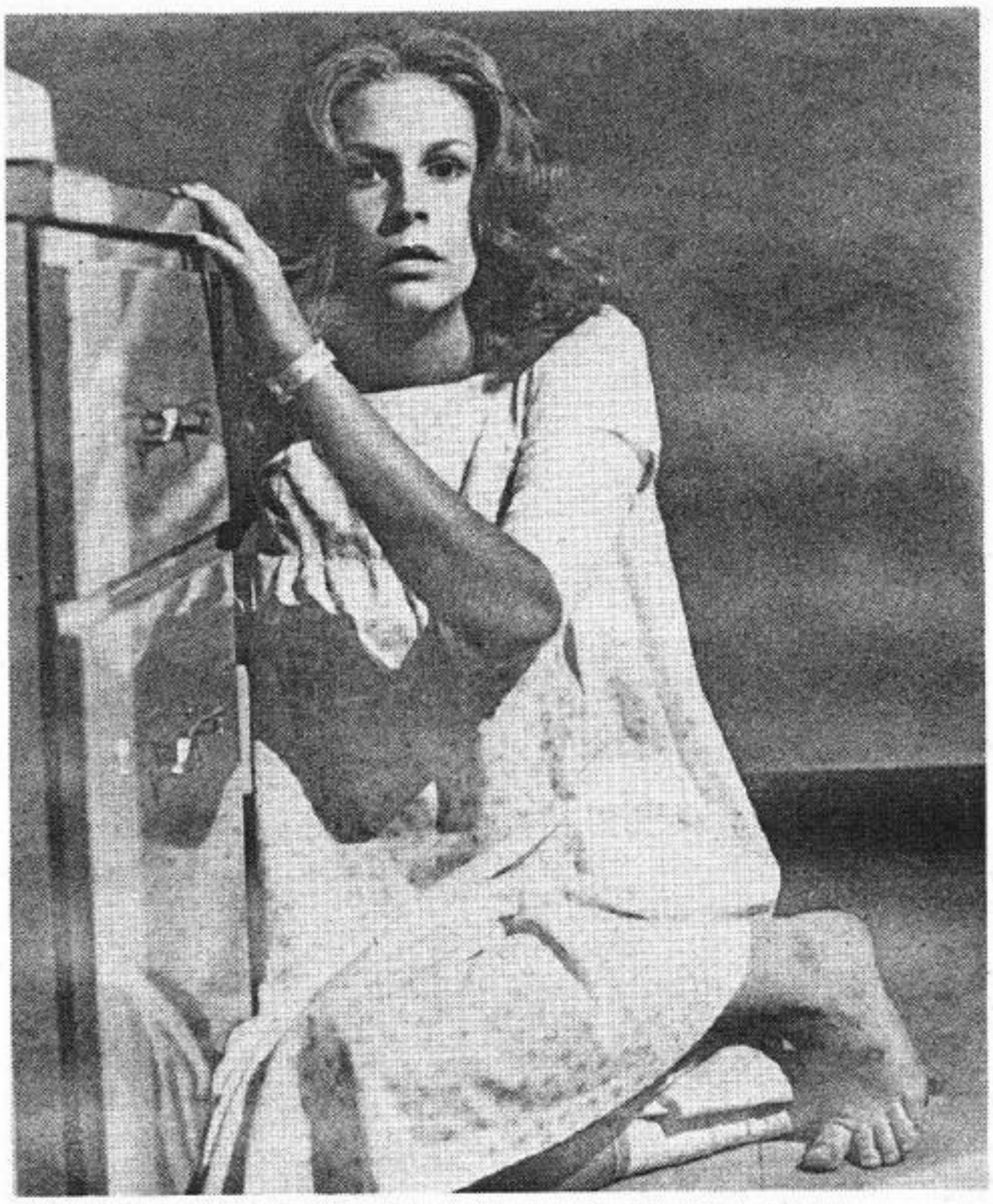
He began to move in the direction of filmmaking when he started shooting videotapes in Harvard's Department of Visual Environmental Studies (the school had no film department). Through the American Film Institute he then made a film which he describes as a black comedy. According to Rosenthal, as far as the film industry was concerned, "it turned out to be the wrong kind of film to make." People would watch the movie and say, "What do you mean it's a black comedy? There's no Negroes in this film." Although the film didn't pave his way into the movie business, Rosenthal learned an important lesson from the experience. "I had to make a film so that they would know right from the beginning that it was a certain kind of movie." The easily recognizable type of movie that he chose was in the thriller genre.

"I had been involved in an acting and directing workshop at the time," Rosenthal recalls. "I had been in there primarily to direct although I had done some acting to kind of get to know the other side of it. One day I had seen a piece of material done by two actors; this very short, gripping material which was called 'The Toyer.' It was based on a short story which was made into a one-act play by Gardner McKay." Rosenthal was impressed enough with the material to obtain movie rights from Gardner McKay (a 60s TV personality who has since become a playwright and drama critic). With independent financing, Rosenthal then made a 26-minute

Director Rick Rosenthal on the set of *Halloween II*.



Dr. Loomie makes sure it's blood on the Haddonfield lawn.



Jamie Lee Curtis cowers once more in the sequel to *Halloween*.

film version of the play. He characterizes the movie as "a psychological thriller, with no violence at all."

Rosenthal had only acquired the right to film "The Toyer" but not the right to distribute it commercially. He had ideas about converting the story into a feature-length film but the scheme didn't pan out. Once again he had made a film that was not seen by many people, however "The Toyer" produced a dramatic development in his career.

He now had an agent and a lawyer who were also representing John Carpenter. Someone from the original *Halloween* crew was slated as the director for the sequel but the deal didn't go through. The agent and the lawyer than advised Carpenter and Debra Hill that, before they looked for any other director, they should take a look at "The Toyer." After the short film was shown, Rosenthal was hired to direct his first feature, *Halloween II*.

When asked how he reacted to the pressure of following up such a huge hit without any feature film experience, Rosenthal replies by saying, "I like pressure." He likens his job on *Halloween II* to getting into a football game for the first time. "I had been training to play quarterack for a long time and when the coach finally let me off the bench into the game, I felt I was ready." He says the one problem he had at first was that he felt that the crew, which had worked with Carpenter on five films already, regarded him as if he were the rookie quarterback substituting for Ken Stabler. "When I was in the huddle," he explains, "I would say, 'Red right 42. Break!' And nobody broke. They'd just look at me as if to say, 'What's going on? Kenny never called that play before.' But other than that, after they understood that I could throw the ball, there weren't any problems.

Rosenthal thinks that it just took the crew some time to adjust to a new man on the set who had a different approach. "I think that John is really fast as a director. And he's like five films ahead of me. I'm not quite as willing to say 'Okay, we've got it, let's move on.' Also, I think, having spent a lot of time acting and with actors, I think I get a little more involved in the performances."

Although his first big break in the film business has been on a well known horror picture, Rosenthal has never considered himself a horror movie fan. "I was interested in suspense films and Hitchcock," he says. "I've never seen *Texas Chainsaw Massacre*, I've never seen *Night of the Living Dead*."

He regards his work on *Darkroom*, which emphasizes suspense and psychological tension, to be closer to his personal style than the slasher movie *Halloween II*. Ironically, though, the Carpenter movie seemed to be instrumental in landing his first *Darkroom* assignment. According to Rosenthal, when his agent approached the producers of the series, the attitude of the people in charge was "Hey, the director from *Halloween II*. That could be an interesting idea." As a result, Rosenthal went in for a meeting with the show's then-executive producer, Peter Fischer. Like other creative personnel connected with the series, Rosenthal has the highest praise for Fischer. "I cannot say enough nice things about him," he comments. "He was terrific: a receptive, smart, bright, funny guy."

Fischer has left *Darkroom* because of creative differences between him and ABC, according to Rosenthal. "I think Peter felt that he was not being given enough freedom to make the kind of show he wanted to make." From ABC's point of view, the problem seemed to derive from the pressures of Friday night scheduling. "TV is very different from features," points out Rosenthal. "When you make a film, you make the picture the best way you know how. You start with a concept at the very beginning, and hopefully the film is the net sum of that concept in the end. But it's basically one shot. Making a series, you're given 13 shots or 22 shots or whatever, and what those shots depend on is where you are placed on the schedule. If, say, we were placed opposite *Dukes of Hazzard*, then the audience we would be trying to snare was the adult audience, people who could be wooed away from *Dukes of Hazzard*, the adult viewers. But now we're up against *Dallas* and the feeling is perhaps that the people we want to snare are the younger people, people who could be persuaded to cross over from *Dallas*. So it feels like the concept of the show has changed, its orienta-

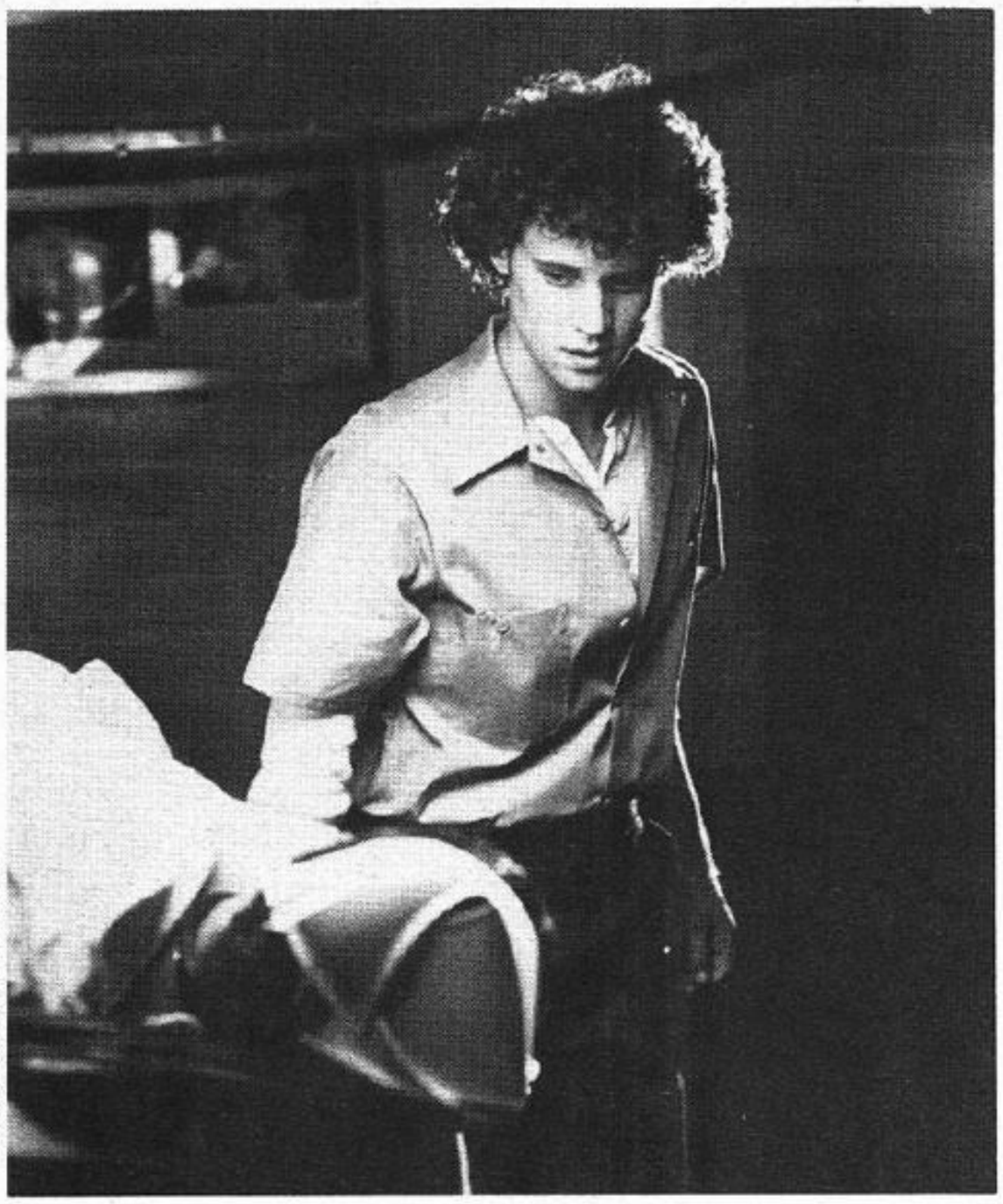


PHOTO: © 1981 UNIVERSAL

Lance Guest discovers one of the many bodies in Carpenter's hospital of death.

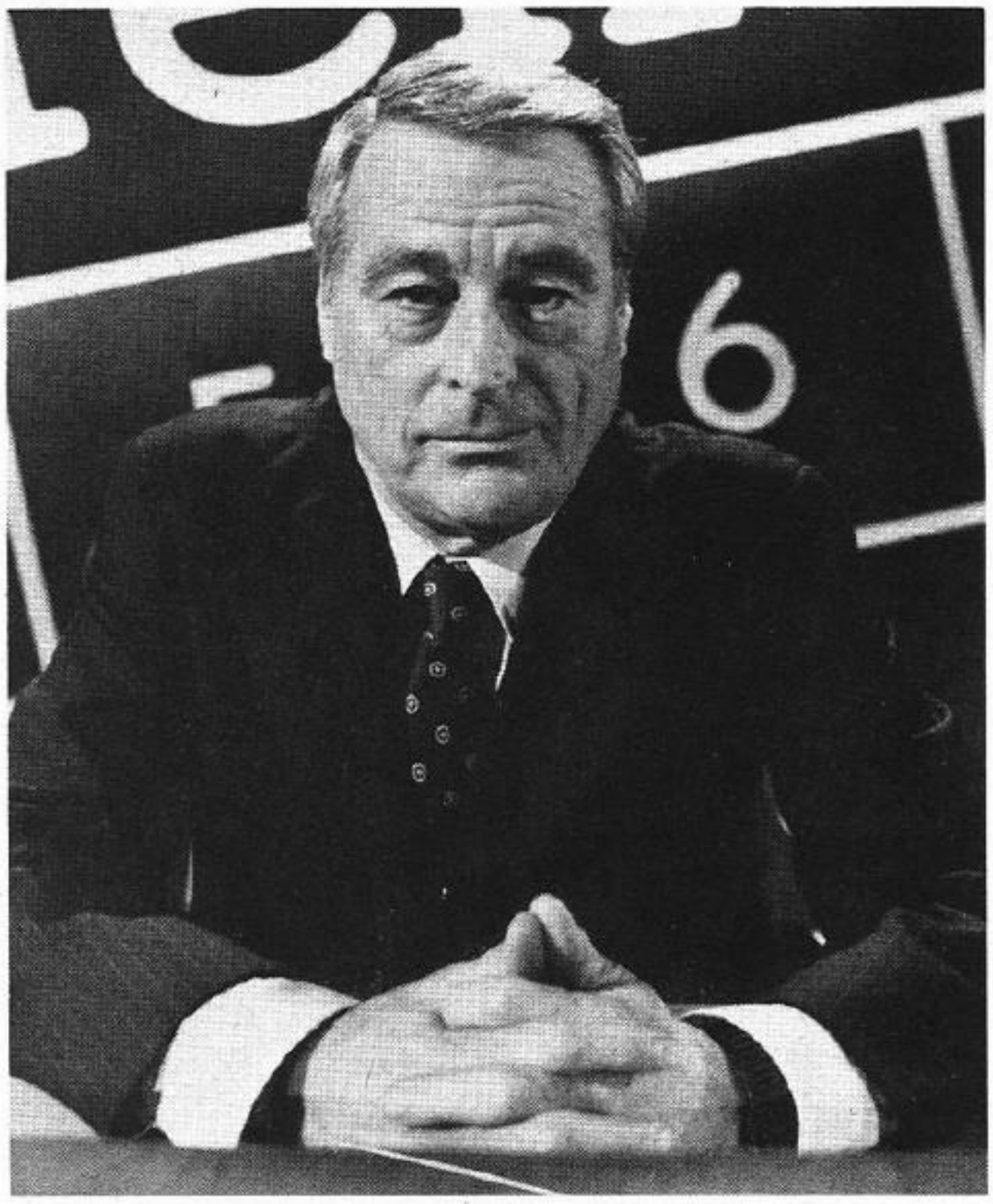


PHOTO: © 1981 ABC-TV

The real thing or a simulation? Robert Webber in the "Closed Circuit" episode of *Darkroom*.

tion has gone from *Twilight Zone* or *Night Gallery*, or more adult viewers, to a little bit more of a bubblegum show. The irony of it all is if in the end they want to move *Darkroom* away from *Dallas* to another time slot where once again they want the adult section of the population, then once again the show will change. But right now I think the show is in transition towards the younger audience."

When he began work on *Darkroom*, Rosenthal found not only the story material appealing but the conditions of TV work as well. "One of the nice things about television is that you get a lot of at-bats. When you're doing a feature everything is riding on one story; it may take one or two years and that's a long time. What's nice about television is that you get a chance to go out and do it and see it in a pretty short period of time."

Rosenthal's first "at bat" on the series was the 40-minute "Closed Circuit" story by Alan Brennert on the pilot show. Robert Webber plays a famous TV newsman and commentator who becomes concerned over the mysterious elusiveness of one of his colleagues. His friend continues to appear regularly on the tube but, for some reason, Webber is unable to ever make contact with him. Webber grows even more suspicious when he decides to visit his friend at the out-of-town studio where the newsman is supposedly taping a show. Webber arrives at the studio to find it completely empty, even though the program is seemingly being broadcast live. Pursuing the matter with greater determination, Webber eventually confronts the head of the network who explains that the missing newscaster has been appearing on television thanks to a matrix box which can simulate not only the man's image and voice, but his thought patterns as well. Unwittingly, Webber then is also duplicated in this fashion and, after much resistance at first, is persuaded to accept an early, lucrative retirement so that the computer simulation may take his place. Just as Webber accepts his fate, the network chief administers the final turn of the screw: in order to keep the simulation a secret, Webber, like his friend before, must be kept a prisoner in the secret sub-basement of the network building.

Rosenthal was quite satisfied with this tense, well-constructed story, though he would have preferred to have included a sequence in which the viewer is shown exactly how the video simulation takes shape. Unfortunately, the restrictions of time and budget made such a scene impractical. The director's favorite work on *Darkroom* at this point is a short, sardonic piece entitled "Uncle George." In this story Claude Aikens and June Lockhart play a couple who must depend on the railroad pension collected by Lockhart's Uncle George because of a heart attack that left Aikens unable to work for a living himself. When the meal-ticket uncle dies, the couple decide they must put a special plan into effect. They must find a substitute for Uncle George so that the railroad will continue to send in the checks. Aikens scours all the parts of town where transients can be found and he comes across an old drunk (played by Dub Taylor) who, over a few drinks, agrees to Aikens' proposition: Taylor will pose as Uncle George and in return he will be provided with room and board and all he can drink. Still reeling from the alcohol, Taylor is taken to the house and installed in his new-found quarters. Aikens then explains that Uncle George's pension was due to a disability. He had been working in the train yard one night when a train accidentally rolled down the tracks and cut off the man's legs. The story ends as Taylor stares in a drunken haze while Aikens approaches with an electrical circular saw.

Louisiana Swamp Murders is a projected 3D production that would make use of a refined Optimax III system, the same set-up that was used for the financially successful *Comin' At Ya!*, to film a story about a mysterious killing spree in the bayou country. The trade papers have mentioned Rosenthal's name in connection with this picture, but Rosenthal is very dubious about the whole project. "I keep reading that I'm going to do it," he reports, "but nobody called me. I think we can forget about *Louisiana Swamp Murders* for awhile. I don't even know if I would do it if it became a serious project." Around the same time that *Louisiana Swamp Murders* is supposed to go into production, this spring, Rosenthal says

PHOTO: © 1981 ABC-TV

"Uncle George," Rosenthal's favorite work on the now defunct *Darkroom*.

he will be working on a film called *Bad Boy*, a movie about juvenile crime that the director describes as "kind of a *High Noon* involving 16 and 17 year olds."

In the meantime, he plans to continue working on *Darkroom*. He seems to be apprehensive about the direction the show is taking as it moves away from Peter Fischer's original adult concept. One of the stories that he did not work on but finds to be one of the most interesting scripts in the series, is an episode about a Vietnam veteran who buys his son some toy soldiers which then come to life. "It's a show that, I think, can appeal to both age groups," he says. "The toys coming to life is definitely a kid pleaser, and yet the film made a very nice statement. I think it's going to be increasingly difficult to do these kinds of shows that have a double-edge." As a contrast, he mentions one of the shows he's directing called "Bishop of Battle." The story is about a kid who is a video-game junkie who ends up getting involved in what seems to be a life-and-death struggle with one of his games. Rosenthal says that the story is a "grabger, not in a negative sense; it has a lot of style, but I don't think it has as much substance as 'Closed Circuit' . . . 'Bishop of Battle' has, in a way, a subtext about obsession, but it's basically a bubblegum show."

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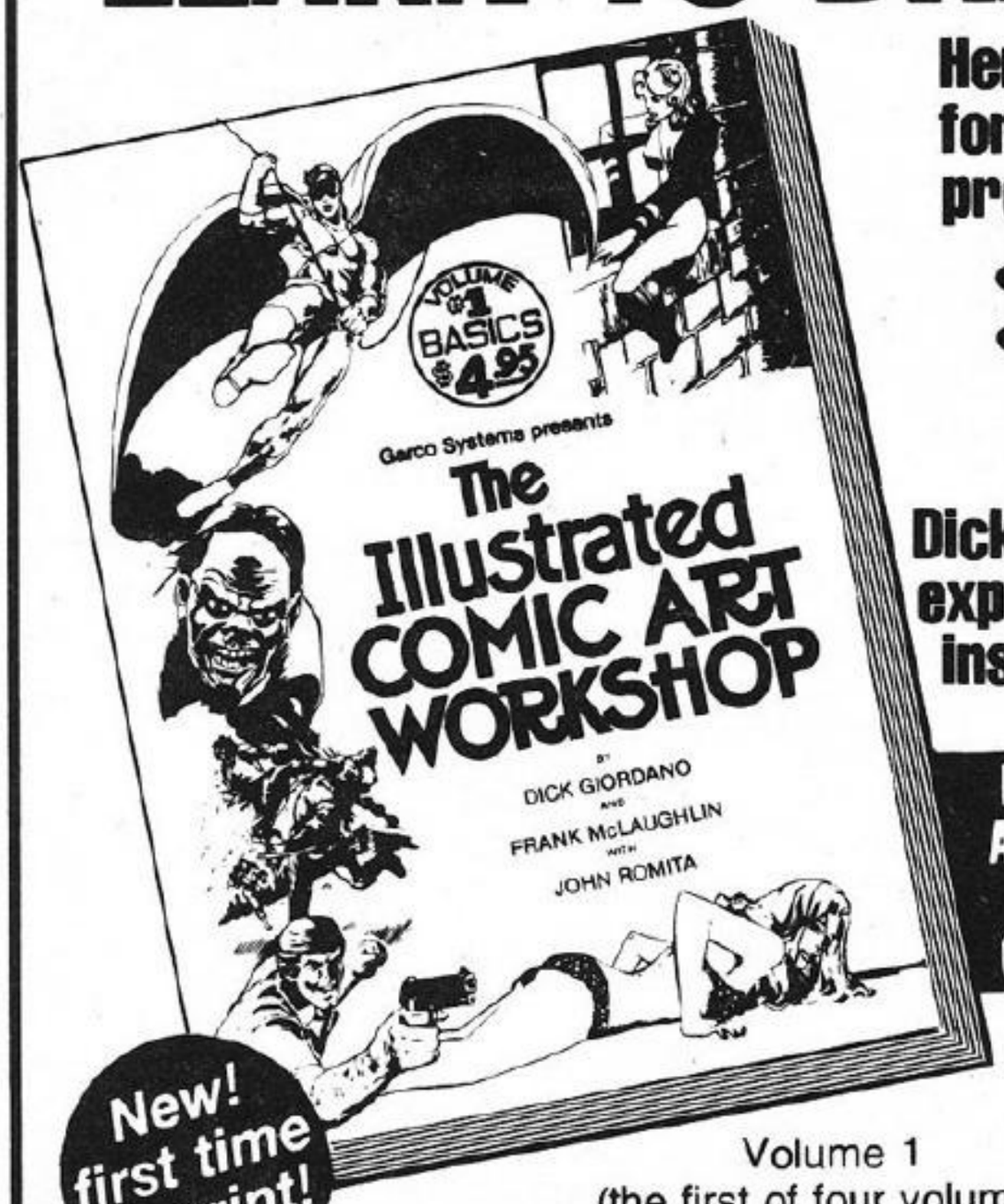

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Dark Shadows Revisited

Return with us to the 1960's—when soapy horror dominated the afternoon airwaves!

By Randy Vest

Traditional viewers of television's daytime dramas were treated to quite a shock one afternoon in the spring of 1967. Those watchers who were tuned into ABC-TV's failing soap opera *Dark Shadows* were suddenly confronted with the unexpected sight of a leering vampire lunging at the pretty neck of a young heroine-in-distress. Wait! Could this really be happening on daytime television? Curious viewers tuned in again the next day to be sure . . .

The vampire turned out to be one Barnabas Collins and his dastardly deeds were far-ranging. He was 175 years old and had been unleashed upon the wealthy and unsuspecting Collins family by a greedy young hoodlum attempting to rob the family crypt of its jewelry contents. But instead of gems, he found the present-day Collins family's long-undead ancestor Barnabas and was promptly bitten and put under his power. Within the next few weeks Barnabas began sampling the blood supply of the village of Collinsport which in turn rechanneled fresh blood into the show's weak ratings. In just a few short weeks the low-rated soap became one of the top programs in the daytime television lineup.

Dark Shadows, which debuted on ABC-TV on June 27, 1966, actually began as a gothic-style romance. The plot centered around Victoria Winters (Alexandra Moltke), a young woman who had accepted a position as governess with the wealthy Collins family in the village of Collinsport on the coast of Maine. Her charge was young David Collins (David Henesy), a spoiled little boy prone to playing practical jokes and seeing ghosts (real or imagined?) all about the house. Also involved were David's surly father Roger (Louis Edmonds), Roger's sister Elizabeth Collins Stoddard (Hollywood star Joan Bennett) and her daughter Carolyn (Nancy Barrett). The show plodded along for its first eight or nine months with a gothic flavor and supernatural overtones. Even then it was not a "typical" soap in that there were no pregnancies, extra-marital affairs or the inevitable coffee-in-the-kitchen scenes that abounded on other soaps at that time. But the show didn't seem to be catching on, so in April of 1967, with cancellation lurking in the wings, producer Dan Curtis ordered the writers to pull out all the stops and introduce a vampire into the storyline. Not having an inkling of the tremendous response that was in store, it was decided that Barnabas would be quickly written out after a few weeks (which was considered sufficient time to pump up the ratings). In casting the role of Barnabas, Curtis chose a Canadian actor whose background was largely on the classical stage and who had appeared only briefly on an earlier soap. Little did anyone know that the name of Jonathan Frid was soon to become a household word.

PHOTOS: COURTESY OF RANDY VEST

Jonathan Frid as the infamous Barnabas Collins, the world's greatest afternoon vampire.

Barnabas, as portrayed by Frid, soon became what several writers phrased "the man you love to hate." His evil actions included holding young ingenue Maggie Evans (Kathryn Leigh Scott) prisoner in a secret room of the family mausoleum in hopes of making her his vampire bride, attempting to strangle Dr. Julia Hoffman (Grayson Hall) when she first discovered his secret, forcing her to murder her associate Dr. Dave Woodard when he found out the goings-on and any number of other disreputable doings. But in much the same way as the current-day 'J.R.' character of TV's *Dallas* affects viewers, Frid's Barnabas soon became a heart-throb for literally millions of female viewers. Frid's fan

Grayson Hall and Nancy Barrett discuss evil doings with a silent third party.

mail was overflowing with pleas for him to bite viewers on the neck and included many requests of an even more provocative nature. Barnabas had suddenly become a teen idol and, as his character became sympathetic and likeable, he graduated to hero figure.

During this hectic time in his career Jonathan Frid was more than cooperative. He did endless interviews, personal appearances and the like. His face saturated the pages of teen magazines and his volume of fan mail was mountainous. Merchandising items began to appear—bubble gum cards, comic books, a short-lived newspaper strip, dozens of paperback novels, records, board games—all bearing Frid's likeness. For Jonathan Frid as Barnabas Collins had suddenly become the nucleus of *Dark Shadows* and was to consistently remain the show's most popular character throughout its run.

Viewers figured that a centuries-old vampire must have a very interesting background, and the writers gratified their curiosity by taking them on a journey into the past to discover how Barnabas' affliction came about. Via a seance, the family governess Victoria was transported back through time to the year 1795 where she encountered not only a youthful Barnabas, but other members of the Collins family who looked exactly like their modern-day descendants. The entire cast of regulars had been recast into new roles, some of them changing rather drastically. Mild-mannered lawyer Tony Peterson (Jerry Lacy) now appeared in the form of fanatical witch-hunter Reverend Trask. Maggie's boyfriend Joe Haskell (Joel Crothers) became the scheming opportunist Lt. Nathan Forbes and housekeeper Mrs. Johnson (Clarice Blackburn) was the prudist and suspicion-laden Abigail Collins. Victoria was accepted into the household (again as a governess) and Barnabas' story began to unfold. Along with the aforementioned characters, a beautiful blonde witch named Angelique (Lara Parker) was introduced and soon became another of the show's most applauded evil-doers.

The 1795 excursion stretched out

over a period of four-and-a-half months. This plot idea was something new, unique and exciting and these episodes (along with those just after Barnabas' arrival in 1967 and the episodes for the major part of 1968) were certainly the "golden days" of *Dark Shadows*.

Dan Curtis knew that adding more supernatural beings to his storylines could only make an already successful formula more potent. Upon Vicky's return to the present (where time had been suspended) new menace-makers followed in quick succession. Angelique reappeared (in the guise of Cassandra Collins) followed by mad Dr. Eric Lang (Addison Powell), his man-made creation Adam (Robert Rodan), Adam's mate Eve (Marie Wallace), warlock Nicholas Blair (Humbert Allen Astredo), vampire Tom Jennings (Don Briscoe) and his werewolf brother Chris (also Briscoe). Plots were largely being 'borrowed' from the classic Universal films of the 1930s and 40s, and viewers delighted in each one.

The show zipped along at a fairly rapid rate until the final months of 1968 when Dan Curtis decided that a major new character should be brought into the show. The new addition was Quentin Collins, a malevolent spirit who, along with female ghost Beth Chavez (Terry Crawford), was taking possession of young David and his friend Amy (Denise Nickerson). *The Turn of the Screw* by Henry James was the writers' inspiration this time around, and their evil Quentin was portrayed by a tall young actor named David Selby. A new heart-throb was born and Quentin soon became the focal point of the story. No doubt Jonathan Frid was pleased with this change as some of the work load would be removed from his caped shoulders. It wasn't long before another journey into the past (1897) was taking place and Quentin's background was told in detail.

The 1897 storyline had a lengthy run of approximately seven months. During this time the cast was doing double-duty by appearing in the first full-length movie version of the show which was being filmed simultaneously by Dan Curtis Productions in association with Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer. The Lyndhurst mansion and estate in Tarrytown, New York became "Collinwood" for the film and most of the regular cast were used in their original roles. Titled *House of Dark Shadows*, it was basically a slightly reworked version of the initial Barnabas plot from the series and was highly successful.

By the time the daily 1897 sequences were drawing to a close, the show's popularity had waned just a bit. The daily episodes were not too involved and moved at such a breakneck pace that unless one was watching each and every day, the story was impossible to follow. Actors were 'killed off' as one character and brought back in the same week as another. Plot inconsistencies abounded, and even the most devoted fans were sometimes thoroughly confused.

A change for the better wasn't immediately forthcoming when, upon

The **Dark Shadows** Cast • Where Are They Now?

Jonathan Frid (Barnabas Collins), America's most beloved vampire, appeared in Oliver Stone's Canadian horror film *Seizure*, and in the ABC-TV movie *The Devil's Daughter* shortly after the show's demise, but then pulled a major disappearing act. Rumors abounded that he had moved to Mexico and abandoned acting altogether; but a few years ago he turned up on stage, in a play at the Pennsylvania State University theater. More recently, he's been spotted on the streets of New York City, but the latest rumors indicate that he's now living in England. It seems likely that Frid will remain a mystery man to his fans for some time to come.

Joan Bennett (Elizabeth Collins Stoddard), now semi-retired, accepts only occasional acting roles. In 1977, she appeared in Dario Argento's terror hit *Suspiria*, and she was in the 1981 TV movie *This House Possessed* in her first character role, as a rag lady.

Grayson Hall (Dr. Julia Hoffman) is the wife of Sam Hall (one of *Dark Shadows'* writers), and now does frequent stage work in New York City. Her most recent appearance was opposite Derek Jacobi in the acclaimed Broadway drama *The Suicide*.

Louis Edmonds (Roger Collins) is still going strong in the soaps (currently as Langley Wallingsford in *All My Children)*, and he, too, remains active on the New York stage.

Nancy Barrett (Carolyn Stoddard), after 4½ years in *Dark Shadows*, continued to work in the soaps, but seems to have disappeared from public life in the past few years.

Alexandre Moltke (Victoria Winters) is divorced from successful businessman Phillip Isles; she has since made occasional appearances on the New York stage.

Kathryn Leigh Scott (Maggie Evans) married photographer Ben Martin and moved to Paris, and then to England. Now in Los Angeles, she does frequent guest shots in prime-time TV programs.

Joel Crothers (Joe Haskell) does occasional stage work, but is best known as daytime heartthrob Dr. Miles Cavanaugh on *The Edge of Night*.

David Selby (Quentin Collins) has been widely-seen in the films *Raise the Titanic*, *Rich Kids*, and *The Super Cops*, but the success he deserves has eluded him this far.

David Henesy (David Collins) married a young woman from Sweden in 1977, and is now in restaurant management in New York.

John Karlen (Willie Loomis) makes frequent guest shots on prime-time TV series, and lives in L.A. with wife Betty and teenage son Adam.

Jerry Lacy (Reverend Trask) has been a regular on three other soaps since *Shadows*, and is currently appearing as Jonas on *The Young and the Restless*. Lacy is also a foremost Humphrey Bogart impersonator, having appeared in several Bogart-themed TV ads and in Woody Allen's film *Play It Again, Sam*.

Thayer David (Prof. Stokes) died July 17, 1978, of a heart attack in New York City. He had been active in film, stage and television, including appearances in the films *Rocky*, *House Calls*, and *Journey To The Center Of The Earth*.

Don Briscoe (Chris Jennings) has retired from public life, and now resides in Memphis, Tennessee.

Lara Parker (Angelique) does guest shots on prime-time TV.

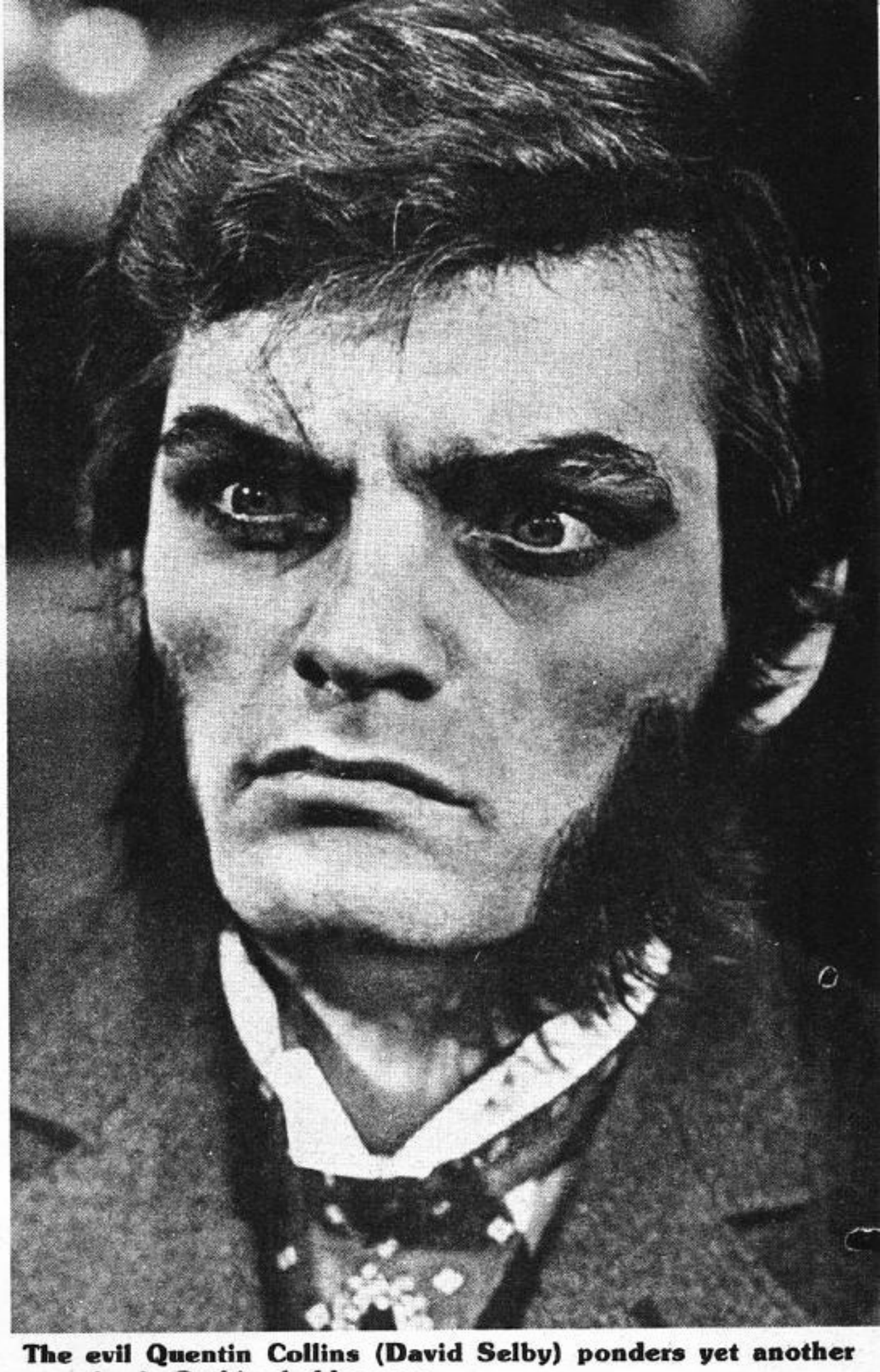
Clarice Blackburn (Mrs. Johnson) is on the writing staff of the ABC soap, *All My Children*.

Craig Slocum (Harry Johnson) died from diabetes on September 11, 1978.

Terry Crawford (Beth Chavez) is head of the International Foundation for Children, Inc., which assists abandoned children and unwed mothers.

Dennis Patrick (Jason McGuire) is Vaughan Leland in the prime-time soap opera *Dallas*, and was one of the prime suspects in the "Who Shot J.R.?" controversy.

In a nod to lycanthropy, Alex Stevens appears as a werewolf.



The evil Quentin Collins (David Selby) ponders yet another exercise in Gothic skulduggery.

the story's return to the present (now late 1969), the writers introduced a ridiculous plot about a supernatural race of blob-like creatures called "Leviathans" who could take on human form. The writers had been successful with their reworkings of the classic horror films of the 1930s and 40s but were now drawing upon a kind of 1950s science-fiction element that just didn't work in the realm of *Shadows*. Even with the addition of another potential young heartthrob (Christopher Pennock) the show was becoming difficult to watch. Plot inconsistencies and complicated storylines could be forgiven, but out-and-out boredom could not.

After what seemed an eternity the "Leviathan" story was wrapped up and the writers' next step was a jaunt into "parallel time." It was discovered that one of the rooms in the deserted west wing of the house contained a mysterious time running parallel to 1970. The people seen inside the room when these changes occurred all looked physically like their regular 1970 counterparts but their personalities and relationships were entirely different. This new premise was intriguing but what initially began as a promising new direction ("Jekyll and Hyde" and "Rebeccca"-influenced plots were introduced, among others) soon became another confused shambles.

When it came time to leave parallel time 1970, Barnabas and Julia attempted to return home, but landed instead in the future years of 1995, where they found the Collinwood mansion in ruins. So, after a brief stop back in the present, the two traveled to1840totry to prevent the death and destruction that would befall Collinwood and its residents unless history could be changed.

With the introduction of 1840 the show continued an already steady decline. A new villain Gerard Stiles (James Storm) was introduced, along with a new ingenue Daphne Harridge (future "Angel" Kate Jackson), but neither struck the spark that would grab viewer interest. Most of the more popular regulars were back in various new guises, but somehow the goings-on were becoming stale. By late 1970 the show was in serious ratings trouble and, sensing the impending doom, several mainstays of the cast departed including Kathryn Leigh Scott and Jerry Lacy.

The final phase of the show took place in parallel time 1840 and was certainly the most dismal of all cycles the show had gone through. David Selby had exited to star in the second *Shadows* movie and, while he was always a close second to Frid in popularity, his departure from the show dealt it a major blow. The storyline now concerned an annual lottery the family participated in to send some unlucky member to spend the night in a haunted room in one of the deserted wings of the house. Something evil lurked there and persons had been known to go insane or die inside it. Other than this supernatural element the rest of the plot was a *Wuthering Heights*-type romance centering around Bramwell and Catherine, portrayed by Jonathan Frid and Lara Parker. For the first time in *Shadows* history

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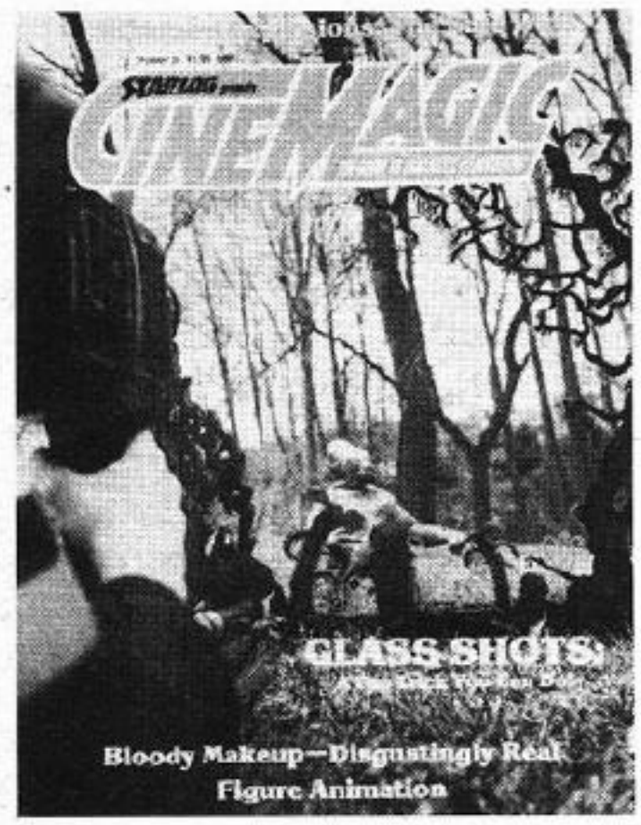

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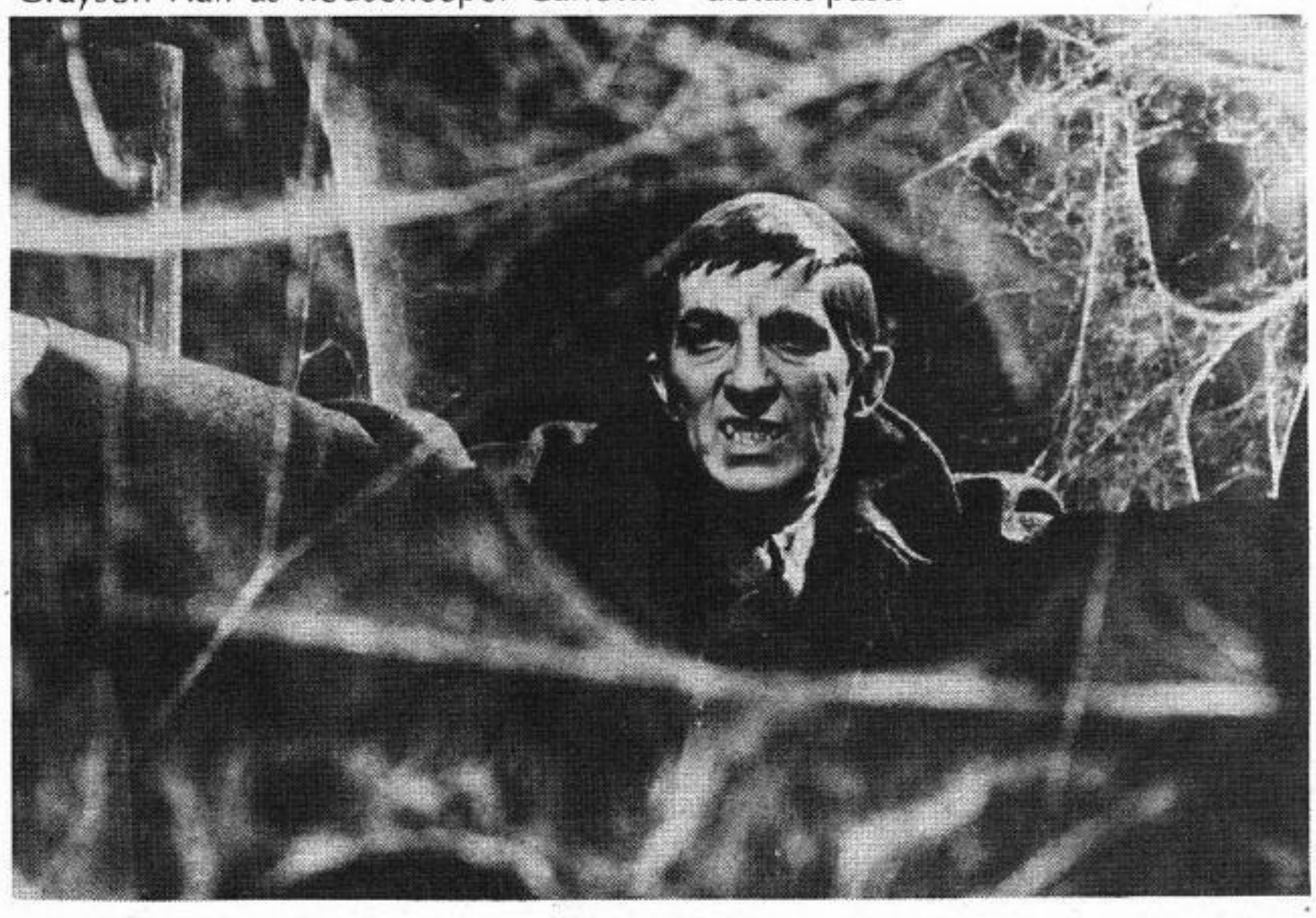
Jonathan Frid demonstrates the Transylvanian Twist at an ABC-TV party.

these two former arch-enemies were now cast as lovers. This fatal mistake, along with the addition of several lacklustre new cast members and an attempt to slant the feel of the show toward romance rather than the supernatural, were the final factors in the show's ultimate demise. The dreaded cancellation was forthcoming and *Dark Shadows* broadcast its final episode on April 2, 1971.

The second film version, *Night Of Dark Shadows* had been filmed during the last months of the show's run and featured David Selby and Kate Jackson as newlyweds Quentin and Tracy Collins. Also on hand were John Karlen and Nancy Barrett as their writer friends Alex and Claire Jenkins, Grayson Hall as housekeeper Carlotta Drake, James Storm as handyman Gerard Stiles and Lara Parker as the evil spirit of Angelique Collins. The film was a beautifully photographed mood piece and was technically superior to *House Of Dark Shadows* but was marred by several editing cuts before its release. This, along with the fact that the TV show had already left the airwaves before *Night*'s release, spelled box-office disappointment, and put an end to any plans Curtis and MGM might have had for further sequels.

Today, having been off the air 10 years, the show's loyal fans remain and a whole new generation of *Shadows* fans sprung up a few years ago when Worldvision Enterprises syndicated reruns of the show to various stations around the country. Unfortunately there were major problems of an undisclosed nature between the syndicators and local stations, and the reruns are seen in very few (if any) markets today. Nevertheless, continued interest remains as evidenced by the fact that there is a yearly convention for the show held in California, along with fan clubs and publications that still abound throughout the country.

Since its demise there has always been speculation if the show could ever be revived, but it seems that prospects for the success of a new version of the show would be slim. *Dark Shadows* was a success largely due to the climate of the country at the time of its run. The show was something new, different and fun. Its form of escapism took us through the Vietnam war, the hippie movement, long hot summers of racial unrest, and much more. Today the exploits of Barnabas and the Collins clan might seem ludicrous and laughable. As it stands now, *Dark Shadows* is and must remain a fond memory of the distant past.



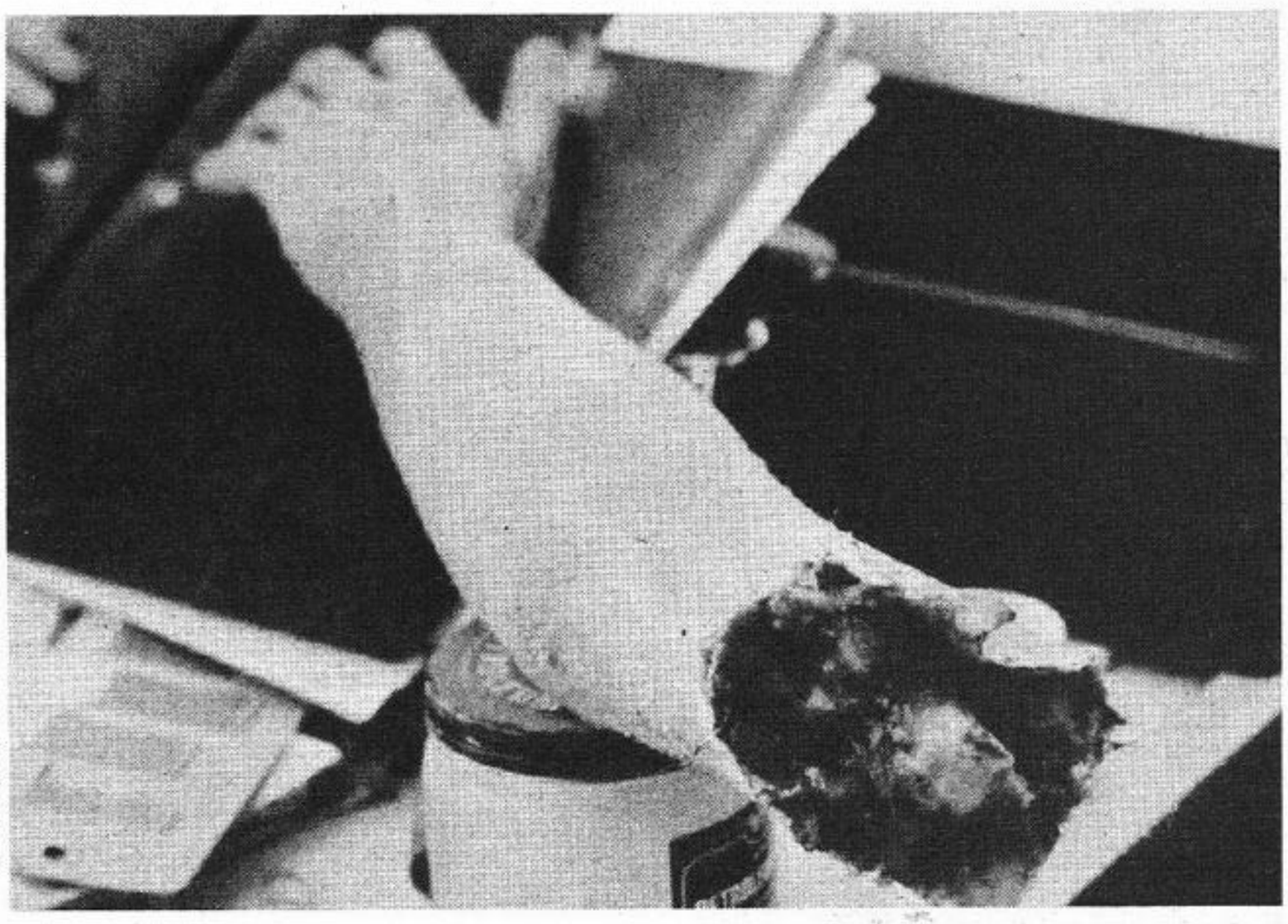
Once an evil heartthrob for housewives everywhere, Frid now has become one of television's mystery men.

Alan Ormsby

(Continued from Page 11)

Eventually, Ormsby's garage shows led to a few super-8 film productions, and he exchanged his cartooning goals for the desire to be an actor. When he attended the University of Miami, Ormsby met a young aspiring playwright named Bob Clark; soon both were writing plays and directing and acting in each other's works. Ormsby then decided to become a serious playwright and, through a number of fellowship grants, saw several of his plays produced.

"Years later I returned to Florida, and met up with Bob Clark again, who had just gotten the funds to mount a low-budget horror picture," recalls Ormsby. The movie was *Children Shouldn't Play With Dead Things*, made in 35mm for less than $100,000—today, an impossible sum for even a 16mm film. "As Bob Clark would quite openly tell you, it was a semi-rip-off of Romero's *Night of the Living Dead*," says Ormsby. The script was an Ormsby-Clark collaboration (one-fifth Ormsby to four-fifths Clark, as reported in *The Black Oracle* at the time), and the film further benefitted from Ormsby's makeups and his performance in the lead, opposite his actress wife, Anya. The story concerns an acting troupe on a desolate island which playfully recites charms from an ancient book in a mock effort to revive a corpse. Unfortunately, the game becomes serious, when the island, a burial ground for the refuse of society, throws up its dead, who lurch after the "children," in order to punish them for their irreverent play.



PHOTOS: © 1975 AIP, COURTESY J. DONALDSON

Savini-built grotesqueries surroung Robert Blossom as the Ed Gein-inspired character in Ormsby's *Deranged*.

While many of our readers count *Children* as a low-budget classic, Ormsby speaks with greater pride of his second collaboration with Clark. "When *Children* was released, it was seen by some people from Canada who were impressed by what we had been able to do with that kind of money. Bob asked me if I had any ideas for a film, and I wrote a treatment, and then a script in about three weeks."

Ormsby's first title was *The Veteran*, which was rejected by the financiers because of its political slant—they suggested *The Nightwalker*, then *The Night Andy Came Home*. Finally the

(Continued on Page 65)

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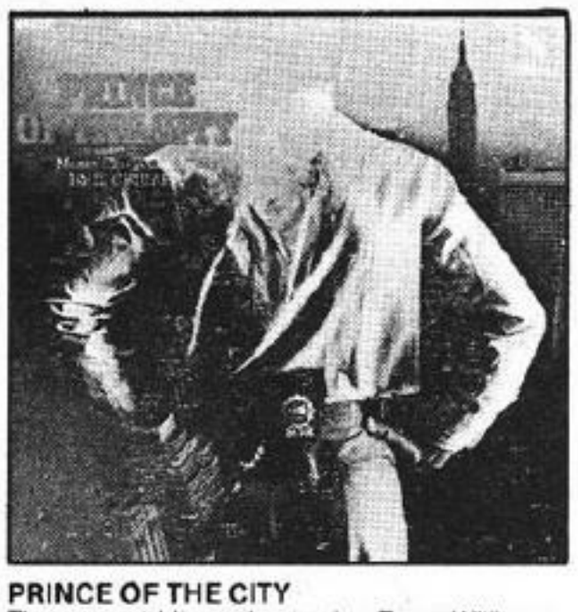

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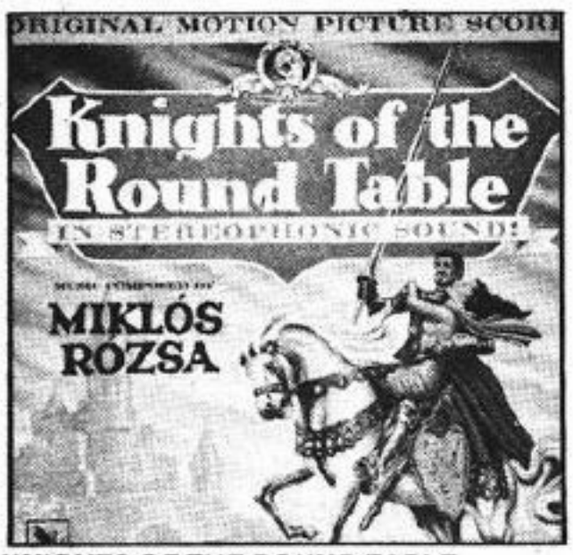

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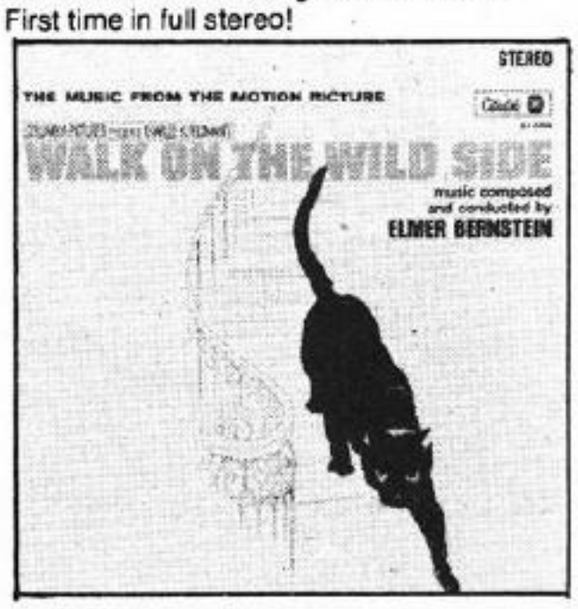

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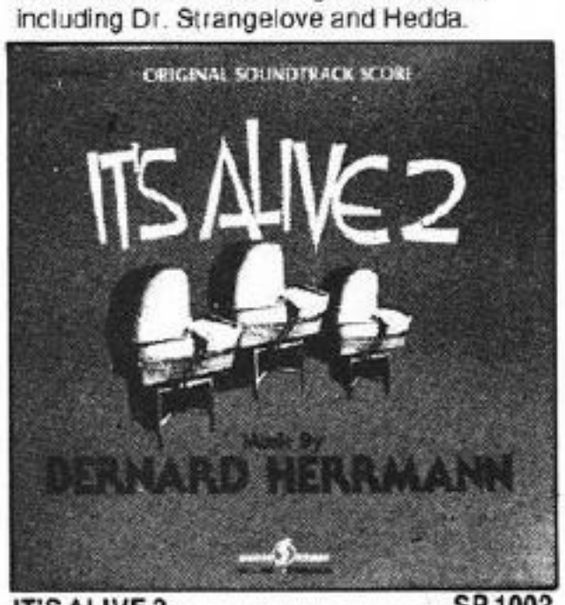

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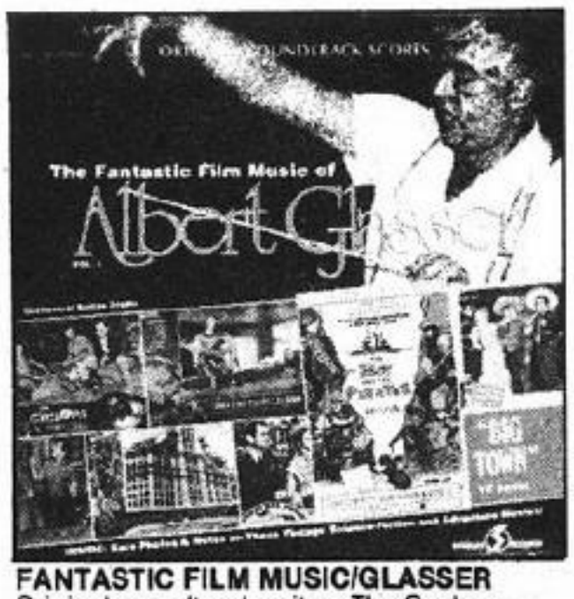

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Independents

(Continued from Page 22)

word—"Boredom," he says. "You go through 10 or 20 minutes of minimal action and boring dialogue in order to get to 30 seconds of effects. With *The Deadly Spawn,* we are aiming for crisp dialogue, non-stop action and suspense, plus the most mind-boggling effects ever put on film!"

An ambitious promise—but it seems that there's more than New Jersey bluff behind it. For one thing, this is one terror film that boasts an imaginative premise that is a far cry from what's been recently seen on the terror screen. For another, he has brought together a number of exceptional talents long active in the fields of film and fantasy.

Bohus first conceived the film's core concept while paging through an issue of *National Geographic*. "It was about some seeds that scientists had found trapped in the ice of the arctic," he says, "that they determined were thousands of years old. They thawed and planted them, and they grew!" The article set Bohus' mind to work, and before long he was working out the storyline with John Dods, the creator and animator of the series of short films featuring the animated adventures of a lovable primitive creature known as Grog—perenniel favorites at short film fests and conventions alike.

The Bohus-Dods story was developed into a script by Douglas McKeown, an actor who brings considerable stage and TV experience to his dual role as screenwriter and director. The final script concerns a meteor that falls to Earth, carrying with it a dormant spore. Unleashed from its rocky prison, the spore begins to mutate, until it becomes a three-headed monstrosity, while spawning additional invaders. What the Spawn does to people is horror beyond description, as they encounter the residents of an isolated community.

"We have a wide variety of effects in the film," Bohus says, "including stop-motion puppetry and full-sized mechanicals, created by John Dods, who is also serving as director of effects. We're working on optical effects as well. Our special makeup effects are by Arnold Gargiulo, a guy who's going to be giving Tom Savini a run for his money before very long."

Despite the grisly nature of much of the film's effects, Bohus has also recruited one of the best-known names in the "high fantasy" field, Tim Hildebrandt, as technical adviser, miniature designer and builder (assisted by Glen Takajian), and as executive producer. Part of Hildebrandt's role in the latter capacity included allowing his home, which he shares with his wife, Rita, to be taken over by the filmmakers to use as a location.

Though it's only in the final stages of

PHOTOS: JOHN DODS

Above: Charles Hildebrandt plays a young makeup hobbyist who offers an indigestible snack to the parent Spawn. Top left: John Dods designed and constructed the baby Spawns, seen here devouring a head built by Arnold Garguilo. Below left: Garguilo adds likelike revolting colors to the foam appliance that transforms actress Ashley Blythe into a Spawn-meal. Because the appliance was sculpted in an open-mouth position (to match the Spawn-stuffed mouth seen above), Blythe's choppers are held open by a convenient orange.

editing, there's already been interest shown in *The Deadly Spawn* by a number of New York distributors, and Bohus is confident that it will be reaching local screens before long—probably by this summer.

Bloody Pulp

This collaborative effort by a group of New York filmmakers is, in some ways, the most fascinating of the three shoestring productions we're examining; it's also the furthest from completion. *Bloody Pulp* is on the shelf as we write this, for arcane reasons we'll touch on later, but by the time this issue of FANGORIA reaches its readers, it will be once again in full swing.

The filmmakers in question—Thomas Doran, Brendan Faulkner, Paul Levine and Frank Farel—have launched *Bloody Pulp* for the very reasons outlined in the introduction to this article; they have no conventional "track record," but their belief in their own talent has led them to work outside the film establishment. But *Bloody Pulp* is a unique answer to this situation. Because it is structured as an anthology film with three stories and a framing device that connects them, plans call for each of the four to direct. "If we were all to raise money for one, bigger film," says Doran, "it would have been very difficult for us to decide who was going to direct it. This way we could all get in."

The threading device for *Bloody Pulp* may seem familiar to those aware of George Romero's plans for *Creepshow*. "It's not a new idea, by any means," says Doran. "But the threading story, and some of the other ideas for this film, come from a short that Brendan and I made in 1974 called *The Maniac*, after which we went our separate ways for a time. It concerned a lunatic who is running an old store filled with ancient magazines, pulps in particular; he proceeds to weave the stories out of these old magazines, thus the title—*Bloody Pulp.*"

The second story in the Doran-Faulkner script was the first to go before the cameras, in the fall of last year. Directed by Paul Levine, the story "Double Cross" concerns a pair of cocaine smugglers who ply their trade on a tropical island that is dominated by a voodoo priestess. With the cooperation of the priestess, the pair have found the perfect means to confound customs inspectors—by planting their illegal cargo inside bodies to be shipped to the U.S. for burial. When one of the smugglers gets greedy, his plans are foiled by grisly zombie vengeance.

Doran explained the technical hang-up that put *Bloody Pulp* on the shelf, shortly before "Double Cross" was completed. "We were using a local funeral parlor, which will remain unnamed, as a location—the funeral director was a friend of ours. What happened was, he started getting body after body after body; 24 clients over a period of 26 days. We just couldn't get in any more, these were crucial scenes, and there were no more scenes that we could do to shoot around it. So we put the whole thing on hold for a few weeks."

As it happened, the "temporary hold" on things stretched out to a few months. Doran and Faulkner, as well as *Bloody Pulp*'s makeup effects man, Simon Deitch (former publisher of *Thrilling Murder* comics), were called on to shoot additional terror sequences for someone else's film, the story of a crazed cult leader entitled *Bloodshed*.

When Doran and Faulkner complete their rescue job on *Bloodshed*, their own movie will again be under way, with Doran's sequence, concerning a woman who turns out to be a real man-eater, and Faulkner's tale about a street hood who thinks he's so tough even the grave can't hold him. Once these segments are near completion, we hope to bring you the full story behind *Bloody Pulp*.

Pranks, *The Deadly Spawn* and *Bloody Pulp* may never prove to have the impact that *Halloween* or *Night of the Living Dead* had. After all, those films arrived at a time of famine for studio-produced terror. Even so, it's a good bet that some among these young people will be regarded in the future as Romero, Carpenter and Cronenberg are today. Whether their struggle for recognition is greater or lesser than their predecessors, they've taken some awesome first steps, and a passion for film is their motivating power.

And, ultimately, that's what it's about, right?

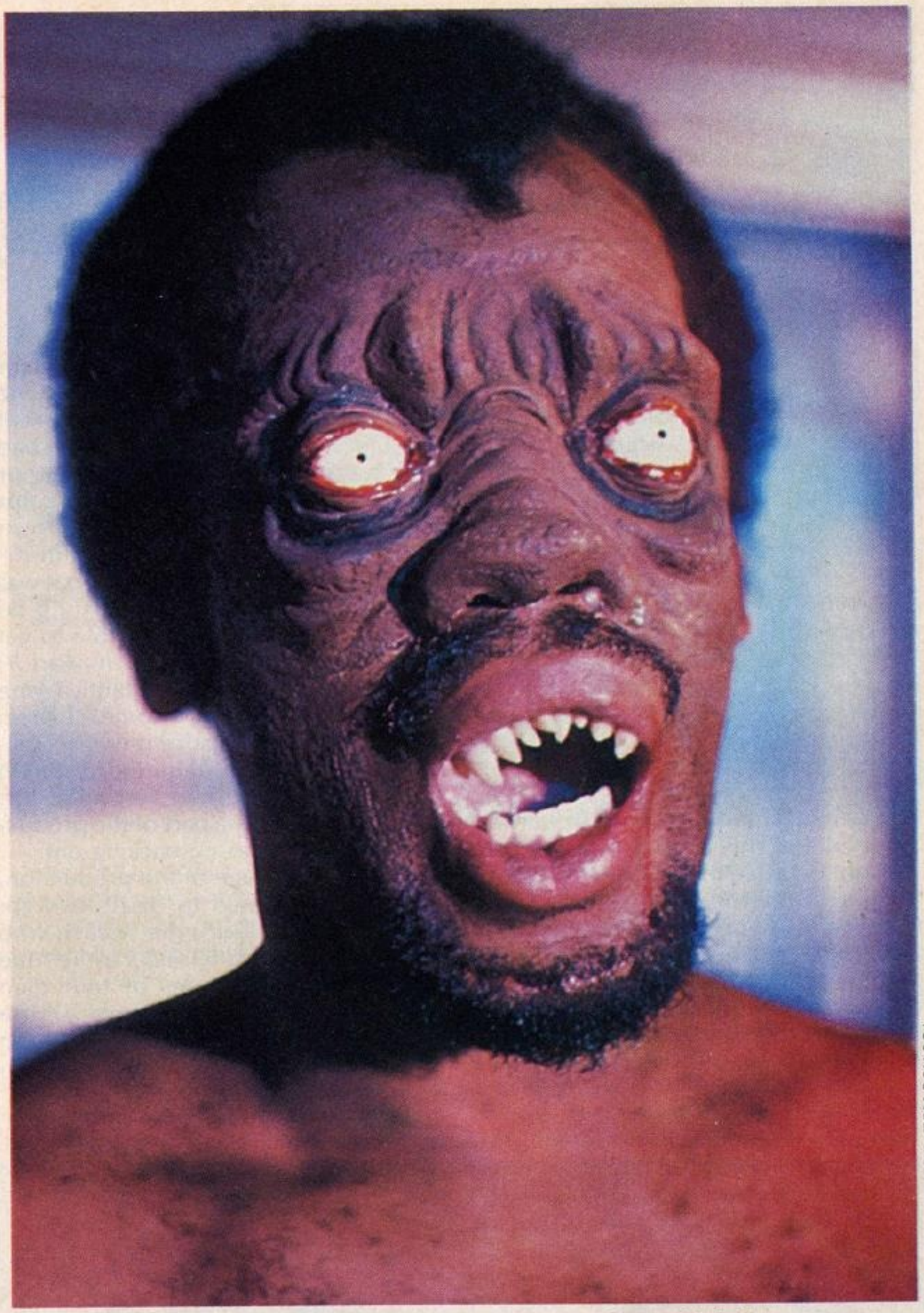


PHOTO: TOM SCIACCA

***Bloody Pulp*'s lead zombie Ron Cofton; makeup by Simon Deitch.**

Dick Smith
Part Two

The makeup master talks about his effects work on Ghost Story *and offers advice to young makeup artists.*

By David Everitt

Now that he is one of the most respected, if not *the* most respected expert in the makeup effects field, Dick Smith can afford to turn down assignments if he feels the production schedule doesn't allow him sufficient time to prepare his work. The movie business, though, is an unpredictable enterprise, and even a slick production can become a frantic effort for a man of Smith's stature. *Ghost Story*, the makeup artist's latest picture, had all the earmarks of an orderly, well-mounted movie, but Smith's involvement turned out to be pressured and, at times, nerve-racking.

The film's production manager first contacted Smith in the fall of 1980 and spoke to him about one effect that was needed for the adaptation of Peter Straub's bestselling novel. "I heard nothing further for months," Smith recalls, "and I figured I'll never hear from him again. Then he called once more—I think it was in December—and all of a sudden it's on and the movie is supposed to start filming in January. I went up to Saratoga Springs where they were shooting and had an all-day conference with everybody. The director [John Irvin] then laid out what he wanted, which was *entirely* different from what the production manager had told me. It was something like four times more work and it was a bit mind-boggling to suddenly be thrown all this work at the last minute, with virtually no time for preparation. So it was a scramble. Originally I thought I'd do it myself. Fortunately I was able to get Carl Fullerton [*Friday the 13th—Part II*] to assist me. We were constantly trying to meet deadlines and some of them we didn't make because it was so last-minute." The work required of Smith was more than he had bargained for, but he was already a part of the production and there was no backing out.

At this early stage of the production, Smith was assigned to create two apparitions of Eva Galli, the woman who had been drowned 50 years earlier due to the drunken actions of four men who grew up to be known as the Chowder Society (Fred Astaire, John Houseman, Melvyn Douglas and Douglas Fairbanks, Jr.). Smith also had to construct a dummy-head of Fairbanks for the scene in which that actor is supposed to tumble off a bridge to his death, and he had to engineer a complicated effects scene showing the actual corpse of Eva Galli as the body's water-logged flesh slides off the skull.

Even though the production was not conducted under the best of conditions as far as makeup was concerned, Smith has nothing but good things to say about working for *Ghost Story* director John Irvin. Smith had contributed some prosthetic devices for Irvin's previous feature, the critically acclaimed mercenary adventure *The Dogs of War*, but did not get to deal with Irvin directly until he went on location to work on the Peter Straub adaptation. He found Irvin to be very receptive to any ideas he had on the makeup for the film, particularly in regard to the varying grotesque appearances of the drowned Eva Galli. Irvin had come across a drowning victim at one time and had found that the victim's skin had turned puffy and com-

PHOTOS: COURTESY OF DICK SMITH

The corpse of Eva Galli goes to pieces in the finale of *Ghost Story* thanks to an effects dummy created by Smith with gelatin appliances and hidden wires.

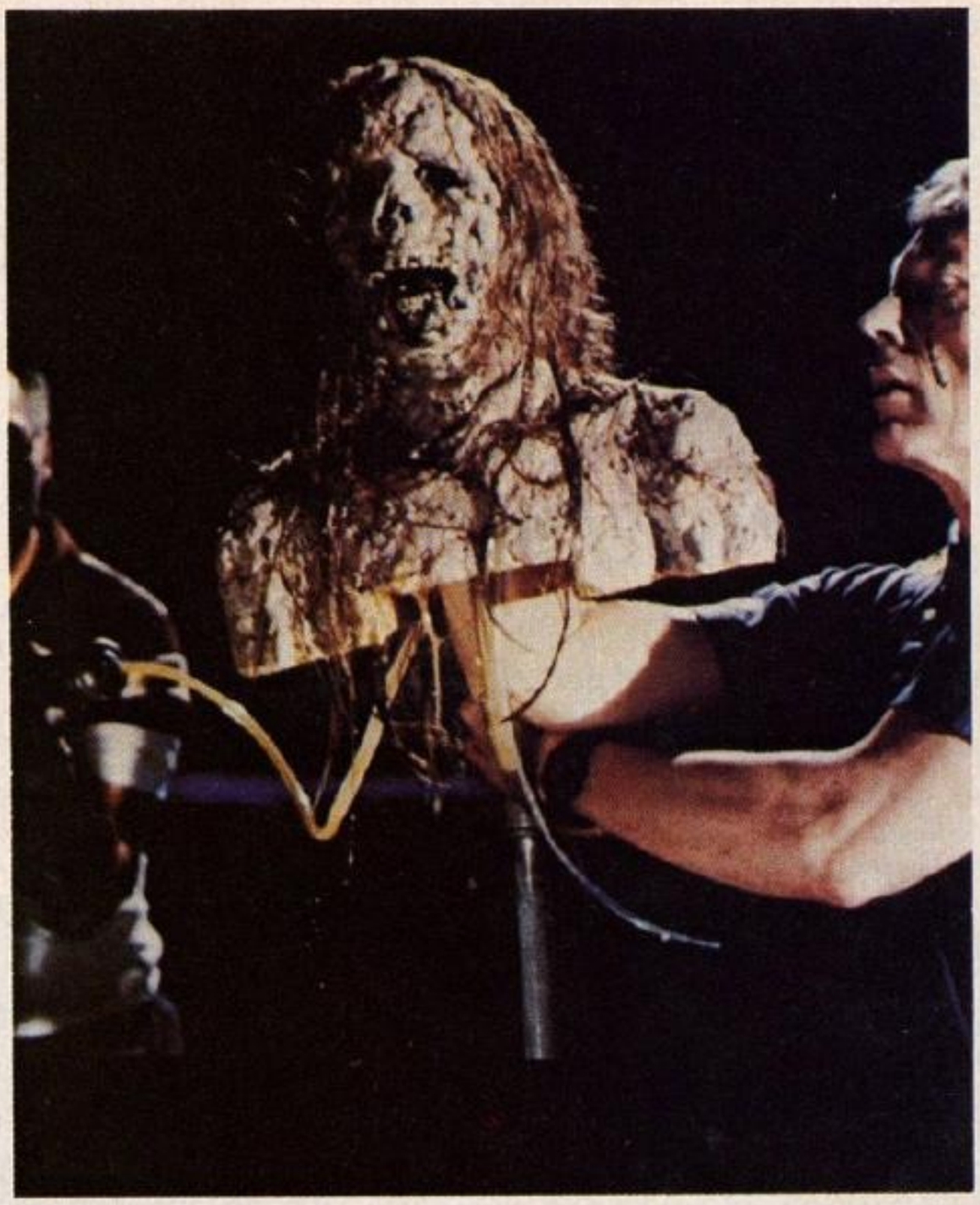
pletely black. "Just artistically, I didn't like the idea of changing this girl's face to black," remarks Smith. "I felt it would just make the face look unrecognizable and it would diminish the possibilities of a mottled coloring that would be much more startling and effective."

To explore other possibilities, Smith made contact with the New York City medical examiner who showed the makeup artist some research volumes in his department's library as well as some slides of drowning victims. Smith says, "I got a pretty good idea of the various phases that a body can go through when submerged in different kinds of water. Having got that grasp, I was then able to go back to John [Irvin] and say, 'Look, it ain't necessarily so. You don't have to have them turn black. It can be anything from simply blotches of pink to purples and irregular colors all the way to black as you saw. In other words, we really can do just about what we want."

The first apparition of Eva Galli's drowned corpse appears early in the film in the bedroom of the newlywed son of Douglas Fairbanks. The horrible sight of this mutilated face drives the son out the high-rise window. The second apparition, a much more decomposed figure, appears to Fairbanks on a bridge and has much the same effect. For both of these scenes, Smith constructed head-and-shoulders puppets with skull-like inner masks and places inside for the operator's fingers to activate the articulated jaw and neck. The second apparition had supposedly just risen out of the river and was highlighted by tubing that pumped water down from the scalp and out of the mouth.

Smith had started work on the complex disintegrating corpse for the film's final scene when he was asked what he planned to do for the scene in the doctor's office. Smith was aware that another apparition crops up in the office of Melvyn Douglas but he had no idea that he was responsible for the effect; he had been under the impression that the sequence would be achieved through optical devices. Now he found out that he was responsible for yet another apparition.

Up until this point, Smith had referred to the two apparitions and the final corpse effect as numbers one, two nd three. For lack of any better name, his new task became known as two-nd-a-half. Smith decided to try a new ack for his two-and-a-half creation. Since I had already made a kind of rogression: a slightly rotted head for he first apparition, number one, and a more rotted one for apparition number two, and then a really corpse-like thing for number three. I decided we had already run the gamut of rot, so to speak, so I got the idea to make two-and-a-half more of a nightmare." The dummy that



In place of the featureless, nightmare face constructed for the scene in Melvyn Douglas' office, Smith was told to concoct another decayed-flesh head. The substitute apparition was actually a remodeling job on the figure that appears on the bridge. After removing the eyes and tearing away some of the latex flesh, Smith was able to operate the ghastly head-and-shoulders dummy in puppet fashion.

Smith created was an especially unnerving figure with a featureless face that was an uncanny combination of beauty (the woman's body and her full, flowing hair) and monstrous ugliness (the gaping, jagged-toothed mouth).

Unfortunately, this apparition, the most imaginative effect created for the film, was not used in the final print. After principal photography was seemingly finished, Smith was called upon to replace his nightmare figure with another rotted-flesh head, just the sort of thing he had originally wanted to steer away from. He took the head-and-shoulders dummy used for number two in the bridge scene and revamped it for greater grisly effect. He removed the eyes, tore away bits of foam latex to resculpt the face, used the water tubing to pipe in a yellow slime material, and left room in the mouth cavity for earth worms.

After he had finished the later-to-be-discarded apparition for the doctor's office scene, Smith could then return to number three, the corpse. During the final portion of the film, Fred Astaire has the car containing the body dragged up out of the river. The door to the car is opened and the decomposed corpse lurches out and falls to the ground where the flesh slithers off the skull. For this sequence, Smith had to make a corpse mask for the actress who comes out of the car and a matching, specially designed head-and-shoulders dummy for the effects work. "The corpse at the end of the story," says Smith "was the most difficult effect on the film."

The first idea that Smith and his assistant Carl Fullerton came up with for the slithering-flesh effect was to rely on heat to activate the process. They made a skull out of a high-temperature resistant epoxy material and then implanted heating devices (soldering iron tips) into the fake skull. The flesh was made out of gelatin which was applied over a waxy layer. When the heat was turned on, the waxy substance was supposed to provide the gelatin with a slippery surface. The scheme seemed promising during a rough run-through, but problems arose when it came time to film a final test. Smtih found he had no way to control the speed at which the gelatin appliances slid off; the heat also tended to blacken parts of the epoxy skull. A lot of work had already gone into the process and now Smith faced a hard decision. To correct the system in its present form he would have to devise a much more complicated heating set-up. "The whole thing began to look so formidable and so problematical that I said the hell with it," Smith explains. "Let's abandon this and find something else. This is what happens with effects. You try to do something that hasn't been done before, or that you haven't done before, and you run into situations where a scheme seems to be the answer, it *looks* very promising, and suddenly you find that it isn't promising at all. It's fraught with disaster and time is running out and you have to come up with something. You don't have time to go on with that possibility."

As the deadline approached, Smith

and Fullerton engineered another effects process that did not involve heat. The new scheme made use of wires to pull the makeup appliances off the skull. This time the gelatin appliances were fitted over a gluey material that would tentatively hold the fake flesh in place. For this sub-layer, Fullerton found a material called Alcogel which not only helped to fix the appliances but had a properly ghastly, stringy appearance when the appliances were pulled.

The appliances were secured into position by wires that ran through plastic tubes usually used for model airplanes. The tubes were implanted into the skull (two to three per appliance) and a length of piano wire was inserted through each tube so that the end of the wire would stick out of the skull and impale the piece of gelatin flesh. The appliances were set loose by withdrawing the piano wire pins through the tubes and, to insure that the pieces moved in proper sequence and at the desired speed, monofilament wires were attached to the appliances and were run through another set of tubes that were also implanted into the skull. To operate the set-up, the piano wires were pulled first to free the pieces and then the monofilament wires were pulled to set the appliances in motion. The complex bundle of tubes and wires had to be orchestrated from an intricate control panel manned by both Smith and Fullerton.

While the flesh fell away, the eyeballs had to shrivel up inside the exposed eye sockets. This challenge was met by fabricating delicate eyeball-shaped plastic sacs that were filled with colored liquid. Tubes leading from the eyeballs through the skull were attached to a syringe which could shrivel up the eyeballs by withdrawing the liquid.

After all the intensive alterations, inventions and preparation, Smith went on location to shoot the scene only to find himself plagued by a hurried schedule once more. Smith describes the predicament: "We're going to do this effect on the afternoon on the last day that they're going to be on location at Saratoga Springs. The very next morning they're flying to Florida for the rest of the shooting. So we start rigging this thing about noon time and we suddenly run into a terrible problem.

"We've made the gelatin appliances as soft as possible. They're made out of gelatin and glycerine, melted together in a formulation that is very weak, like a jelly fish. It's hard to control the actual quality of the shells, even though you've measured the quantities out; they still vary a bit. Well, we put these pieces on and the pins are placed through the appliances, but instead of holding in position, the biggest, heaviest piece is ripping. It's just so soft that the weight of it makes it tear right off the pin! It's slipping off and it's disaster-time. And we've got to shoot today! Time is running out.

"We try different things and I'm quite frantic. They're shooting other scenes—they're desperate—they've got a lot of things to shoot that day and they're trying to get everything done. I finally say there's no way we're going to make these pieces work. We're going to have to scrap this bunch, pull out our second set, and we'll have to reinforce them so they won't pull off the pins. I know how to reinforce them, it's just that we have to scrap all the work we've done to that point and start from scratch.

"We found that Crazy Glue will glue gelatin quite nicely. So we glued the gelatin to little pieces of nylon stocking to reinforce them and then we assembled the thing and the pins could not tear the appliances. But by the time the crew was ready to film the sequence it was about four o'clock in the afternoon on a winter day. The light was going very fast and we had one shot at it.

This horrific bride was added by Smith in the eleventh hour of production.

"To add to all this, one monofilament had broken. One piece had got stuck and we just had to reach in and correct it. Also we had tried to work it so that the monofilament pulling the pieces would tear out of the gelatin so the wires would disappear from view when the pieces were drawn off. Some of these monofilaments didn't tear properly, so it wasn't perfect by any means, but there was no time to do another take since it would have taken hours to rig it up again." Despite all the minor catastrophes and last-minute tinkering, John Irvin said he was perfectly satisfied with the results once the scene was finally recorded. When Smith characterizes effects makeup as being like "going over the top" (see Part I), he is no doubt thinking of *Ghost Story* as a prime example.

With the conclusion of shooting for *Ghost Story*, Smith then faced another major task, the elaborate makeup effects for an upcoming horror film entitled *Death Bite*. Before he could complete this project, however, *Ghost Story* came back to haunt him. First, he had to replace apparition number two-and-a-half, as described before, and then he was asked to create a new decomposed rendition of Eva Galli, dressed in a bridal gown, to help punch up the ending of the film. This apparition appears before Fairbanks' surviving son while he is laid up with a broken leg in Galli's decaying house.

Smith put together this final effect in two days. He modified a real skull with a plastic jaw piece that was drilled in such a way as to allow room for the operator's hand. The skull was then dressed up in grotesque fashion with prosthetic flesh made from plasticized ethyl methacrylate (a dental material), a shriveled tongue, and neck skin that was cannibalized from Blair Brown's mask from *Altered States*. Assisting Smith on this rush-job was Rick Baker, who constructed a hideous claw-like hand.

With *Ghost Story* finally behind him, Smith was able to turn his full attention to his next picture. *Death Bite* is the story of a huge, poisonous snake whose bite causes the sort of terrible morphological consequences that only a makeup artist of Smith's caliber can put on the screen. The showcase effect of the movie occurs in the final reel when one of the human heavies is bitten and undergoes a massive transformation that bloats his arm and face to mind-boggling proportions. Smith does not want to reveal too much about his effects work on *Death Bite* at this early stage, but he did supply us with some general information about some of his techniques used to accomplish the amazing phenomena. At first the actor's face is altered with concealed air bladders and then, after a cutaway shot, a complex head-and-shoulders dummy is substituted to show the climactic stages of the transformation in which the face both swells and disintegrates. These changes are effected by a fluid pumped into the dummy by means of a specially designed mechanical system.

Death Bite is an unusual assignment for Smith because this is the first film in which he will be directly involved in the mechanical side of effects, and the mechanics are of an especially complex nature. According to Smith, "It's so complicated setting this system up that we can only shoot with it once a day. It

would take hours to set it up to do it again. The big effects scene also involves certain mechanical devices such as eyeballs that bug out and a tongue that swells up and the head is mechanized in order to move the jaw, the neck and so forth. It's the most elaborate thing I've yet had to deal with. This is entirely made by Carl Fullerton and myself and we're going to use five people to operate it." Now that he is fully involved in this area of effects work, he says he is "beginning, frankly, to feel a little less scared of the whole situation, which is just as well, because I think I'm going to do more of that sort of thing in an up-and-coming MGM film." This latter picture is a vampire movie entitled *The Hunger*. Smith does not have a firm deal on this film yet but he believes the assignment should come through. He says that *The Hunger* will be a very unusual vampire story set in New York City and that it would entail horror effects work that he describes as a "potpourri, like *The Exorcist*. It will not be just one phase of makeup art, but will instead combine many different problems and many different creative challenges."

In between assignments, Smith is able to find the time to devote to another makeup-related occupation, one that affects a great many people, namely answering the hundreds of letters from would-be makeup artists. As the chief mentor for aspirants in the field, Smith does his best to answer each letter-writer individually. In very rare cases, when the writer's sample photographs indicate *exceptional* talent, Smith is able to personally introduce the enthusiast into the profession, but in the great majority of cases he can only offer some general advice about what it takes to break into makeup. To answer questions that FANGORIA readers may have about this facet of movie-making, he outlines the basic groundrules and options that face the neophyte makeup technician.

The standard way to find work in the makeup field is through one of the IATSE makeup unions, either local 798 in New York City (the business agent is Edward Callahan) or local 706 in Hollywood (Howard Smit). To get into local 798 on the east coast, you must go through the union apprenticeship program. The screening committee for this program meets only when the union needs more members and the competition amongst applicants is fierce. If 100 applicants are being considered, only a half dozen or so may be selected. The program lasts three years; the work is irregular and apprentices are only paid when they are working. Classes are given to supplement the on-the-job training. The apprenticeship program at a network like NBC provides a regular working wage and lasts only a year-and-a-half, but the program is even more difficult to enter than the union set-up.

On the west coast, in local 706, there is no such apprenticeship option. As far as the union is concerned, the only way a person can get makeup work is if he is listed on what is called the Industry Experience Roster. There is a qualifying examination for entrance on this roster but there is also a difficult qualification that a person must meet before even earning the privilege of taking this exam. In the previous 18-month period, a makeup artist must have accumulated 120 days of work on a film that is produced by someone who is a signatory to the IATSE contract, in other words, a major production. The maddening wrinkle to this problem is that a major production is not allowed to hire someone not on the Industry Experience Roster as long as a union technician is available for work. And even if no union worker is available, the producer would still not be able to get a name of a suitable non-union artist from the union because government regulations make it impractical for the union to keep a list of back-up artists.

How, then, does a young person find his way into the business if he is unable to overcome the obstacles that stand between him and union membership? Usually, through personal contacts, luck and persistence. It is important, as well, to live and work in either New York or Hollywood and to circulate in the film world.

In Hollywood, television networks may hire people not on the Industry Experience Roster, even though CBS and NBC have contracts with IATSE, and NBC with NABET. However, union membership may be required by the heads of makeup departments.

Another possibility is in the recently expanded field of special makeup effects. Top people in this area, such as Rick Baker, Tom Burman and Rob Bottin have established their own makeup studios and have assembled young crews to assist them in meeting the increasing demands for effects in movies. One such set-up is Rick Baker's EFX *Studio (see FANGORIA #16)*, while others operate on a smaller scale, as in the case of Stephen Chioto who grinds out makeup effects for monster films from his house. The assistants working in these studios are described by Smith as "bright, young, talented sculptors or talented mechanics who make the mechanical apparatus for the inside of the effects creations. These people are employed in lab work, not regular makeup, so they have nothing to do with the union; they work in these establishments outside of union jurisdiction and, while the union is not happy about this, nevertheless they are working and functioning . . . For young amateurs, this kind of work can be very attractive. In other words, in order to do creative work, and earn a living, it's no longer necessary, strictly speaking, to belong to the union."

The other, obvious way to work outside of the union is to work on non-union pictures, independent features that usually concentrate on horror. Tom Savini, for instance, one of the best known makeup effects artists, is still not a member of the makeup union because all of his work has been on non-union features. Success stories along this route, though, are quite rare.

Dick Smith transformed himself into a hideous ghoul in this picture from his *Monster Makeup Handbook*. His simplified technique in this instance, geared for use by kids, made ingenious of such household items as Karo Syrup and bread crumbs.

On the set of *Ghost Story*, Smith checks the head-and-shoulders dummy of Eva Galli's corpse which is used in the most complex effects scene in the picture.

Smith also warns against the risks involved in dealing with independent producers. This work "pays very little and, in many cases, payment can be a tricky business. A person who works in that kind of operation should get payment in advance whenever possible; at least partial payment in advance, and you should get payment on a regular and frequent basis. Never let them owe you anything for more than a week at a time. If you don't get paid it's a lot more painful if it's a large sum than a small sum. Producers in that area will brow-beat you, lie, and kid you along, in order to stall paying you till the work is done. Then you have no way to collect."

Smith also likes to point out the many disadvantages of movie work that young people may not be aware of. The work is usually very erratic so there is no steady employment to rely on; the long, unpredictable hours make a "social life or even a very human life" very difficult because one will find it very hard to find the time to do the little things that most people take for granted: going to the theater, celebrating Christmas with the family, throwing a party, seeing friends, taking a vacation or even making a date. A lot of these little things add up and can make life a very frustrating experience. A young makeup artist also cannot choose where to live unless he is satisfied with the choice of either Hollywood or New York. In many ways the profession can be very restrictive.

The first and most important choice a young would-be makeup artist should make is whether he is suited for this kind of arduous enterprise. "My feeling is," says Smith, "that a person shouldn't really try to get into makeup unless they are wild about it, a little crazy in fact. I don't think it's worthwhile trying to get into this profession unless you have a passion for it, because the only way you're going to be really any good at it and really succeed at it is if you do have that kind of passion. I could liken being a makeup artist to being a ballerina or a pianist. Those two things to me always typified professions where enormous dedication and self-discipline and sacrifice are necessary in order to succeed at it. I think of makeup much the same way."

Smith suggests that a person who is not willing to put up with all the hardships of the movie business should perhaps find a related, and more reliable, line of work. One such occupation might be that of a dental technician which, according to Smith, requires relatively little training, can provide regular employment and comfortable pay, and can require a great deal of artistry. In some cases, experience as a dental technician can also lead to a makeup career. John Chambers, for example, started out as a dental technician.

In order to help enthusiasts decide whether they should pursue a career in makeup, Smith lists a series of questions to determine the extent of the person's interest, the depth of their "passion" for this endeavor. Some of these questions include: "How much time are you spending on makeup right now? Have you read all the books there are on makeup? How much makeup have you actually done? For instance, have you made up yourself much? Have you, say, taken Corson's book *Stake Makeup* and tried to reproduce those makeups on your own face or on your friends? How much self-teaching have you attempted? Virtually all the top makeup artists are self-taught. We've developed the ability to look at our own work and know what's wrong with it and to figure out what we've got to do to do it better. If you are not working hard at doing makeup right now, you probably aren't cut out to be a makeup artist."

Fiona Lewis

Our Femme Fatale—a sultry Englishwoman whose Strange Behaviour has stirred up quite a Fury!

By James Verniere

Fiona Lewis is arguably the most talented and beautiful unexploited resource in film today. It may have something to do with her wicked tongue, coupled with an intelligence that, among starlets who have made their names in low-budget horror, is startling. This woman is not the type to make points with directors who need four assistants just to stroke their egos. This is the woman who walked up to Brian DePalma after the first screening of *The Fury* and said, "Brian, I'm very disappointed!"

Ironically, many of the most rabid horror/sf fans do not know Fiona Lewis by name. Oh, but they recognize that face. It's almost a caricature of feline sensuality. In her latest film, Michael Laughlin's *Strange Behavior,* she looks like a combination between Gale Sondergaard in *The Spider Woman* and the *Ice Queen,* and it's the otherworldliness of her looks that makes her so unforgettable (those lucky enough to catch the layout she did in *Oui* a few years back know that the rest of her is as heavenly).

Yet, despite her anonymity, Fiona Lewis has worked in some of the genre's most stylish films with some of the genre's most respected directors: In 1967, she had a small part in Roman Polanski's *The Fearless Vampire Killers.* She co-starred with Vincent Price in Robert Fuest's *Dr. Phibes Rises Again* (1972). In 1973, she starred in a classy CBS production of *Dracula,* directed by Dan Curtis, starring Jack Palance, and written by Richard Matheson. She was Roger Daltry's mistress in Ken Russell's phantasmagorical *Lisztomania* (1975), a Freudian/Nazi nightmare vision of the life of Franz Liszt. In Brian DePalma's *The Fury* she was a government agent whose job was to keep a teenage psychic sexually occupied. Who can forget the scene in which she is levitated and bled to death when the young psychic (Andrew Stevens) goes berserk? And in Michael Laughlin's *Strange Behavior* she plays Gwen Parkinson, a government researcher with a decidedly kinky bent.

Yet, for all of her talent and experi-

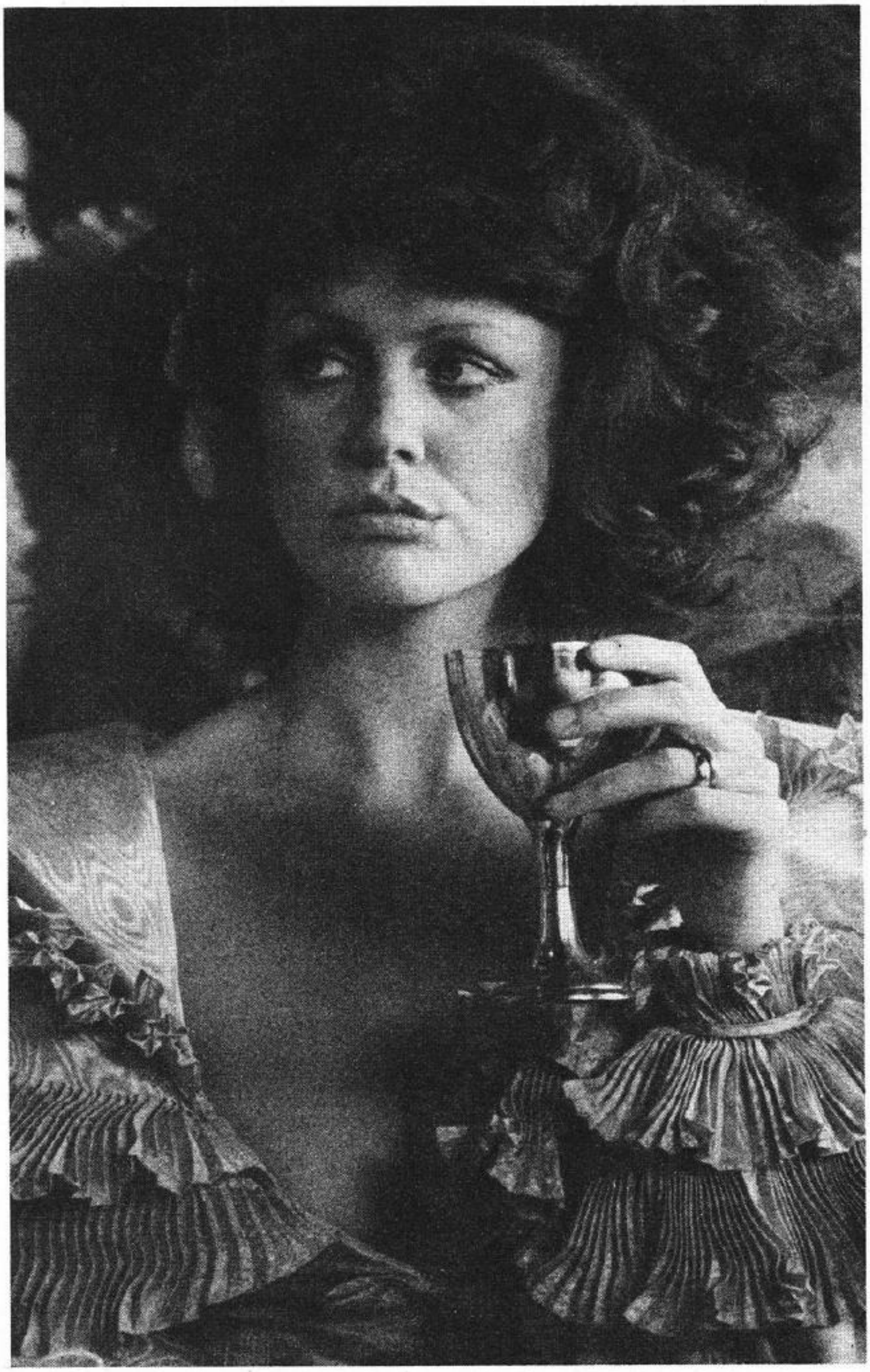
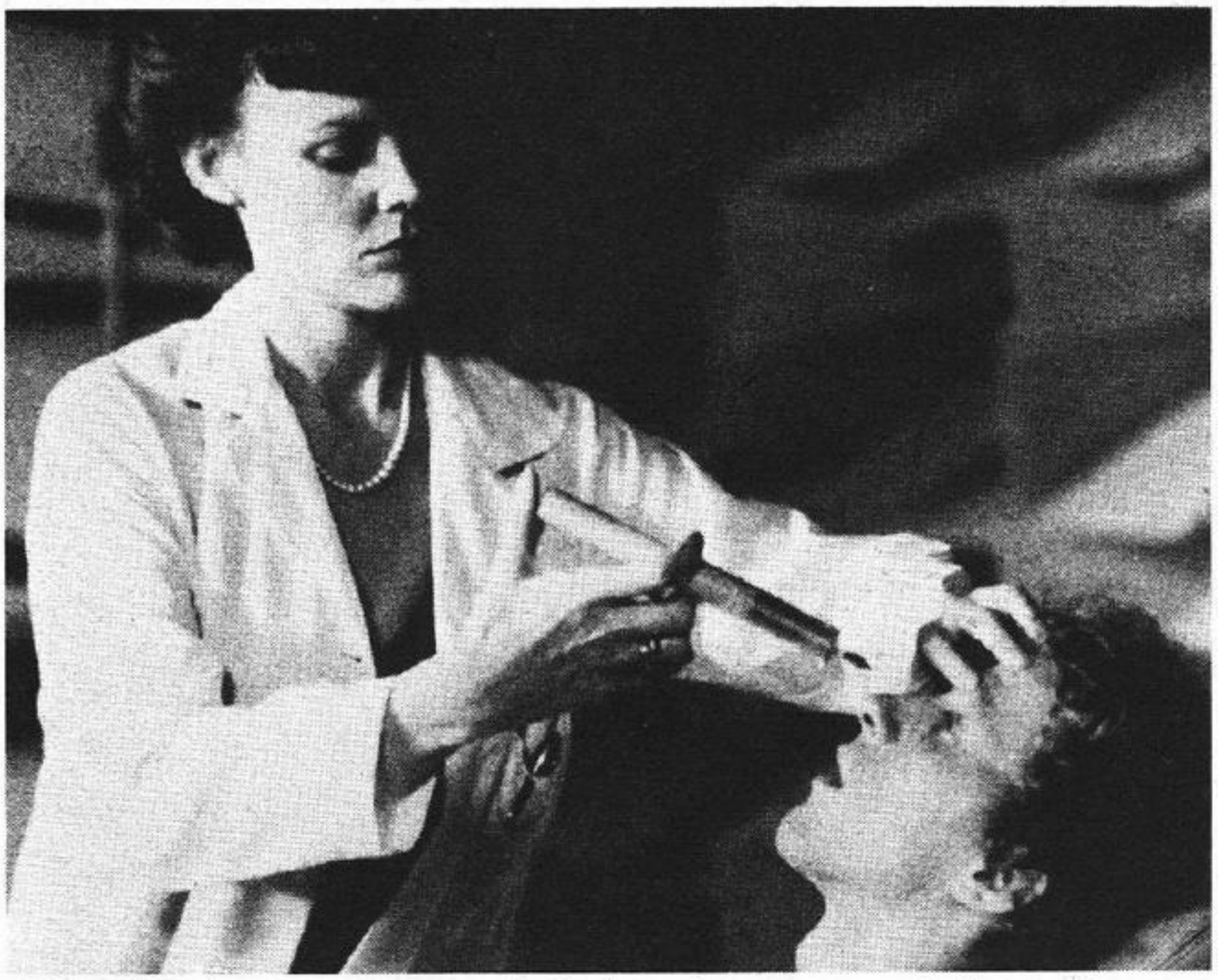


PHOTO: © 1975 WARNER BROS.

Our heroine offers a peevish pout as Countess Marie in *Lisztomania*.



"This will only cause *extreme pain* for just a few *short months*," says Dr. Fiona in *Strange Behavior*.

PHOTO: © 1978 20TH CENTURY-FOX

"Frankly, Fiona, if Brian doesn't make me a star, I can always direct," says John Cassavetes in another phony FANGORIA quote.

ence, Fiona Lewis is disillusioned with film and filmmakers, so disillusioned that she has been semi-retired for the last several years, working as a free-lance journalist and screenwriter.

When upon meeting Miss Lewis I reminded her that I had recently interviewed an old friend of hers named Jacqueline Bisset for another publication, she lit up.

"Oh, my old roommate. Is she in New York? Did you know we once shared a flat in London? Can you imagine waking up day after day and finding this gorgeous creature in the room? It was a tiny place, two beds and a gas burner. Horror at 12 pounds a week. Well, Jackie's done quite well for herself, hasn't she?" she asked with a wicked smile.

Lewis met Bisset while working for an airline called Eagle Airways, selling tickets on the graveyard shift ("it was terrible"). She gave up to join Bisset, who was working at the time as a model. Somehow, the two met Roman Polanski. Bisset got a part in *Cul-De-Sac* (1967), and Lewis in *The Fearless Vampire Killers or: Pardon Me, But Your Teeth Are in My Neck* (1967). Since that time Lewis went on to make several films, many she no longer chooses to remember.

At any rate, Fiona Lewis came out of her semi-retirement and abandoned her desk on a lark to star with Michael Murphy and Louise Fletcher in *Strange Behavior*, which is an old-fashioned mad scientist film about a Dr. Mabuse-like figure named Dr. LeSange, a behavioral psychologist who turns a town full of teens into killer devoids. It's a kind of *Hardy Boys Go To Hell*. Lewis's Gwen Parkinson is a sexually repressed assistant to LeSange. In her lab coat and her spiked heels, she is a cold-blooded killer with a current of molten lava just beneath her porcelain exterior, and for her performance, she has received the kinds of reviews actors dream about.

"You have no idea what this film has done for my ego," she said laughingly as she sat before me in a conservative grey pin-stripe suit that somehow looked terribly sexy on her. "I'm quite stunned," she added. "I never thought I'd get reviews like this." Then without missing a beat, she added, "Too little, too late."

Surely not, I protested.

"Well really, I'm 35. What am I going to do? Start all over again?" she asked. "Well, make that 31.

"I'm a journalist now, free-lance. I do magazine pieces if I can get them. I used to write a lot for the *L.A. Times*. But now I write screenplays."

Lewis' decision to switch to journalism had to do with her dissatisfaction with her career as an actress. In 18 years of work, she estimated that she had worked steadily for perhaps two years. "In between times," she said, "it's incredibly boring. Years ago I decided I should try to be something else, and I rather arrogantly decided that I could be a journalist."

Fiona Lewis has always wanted to be a writer, even in the days when, as a girl, she found herself ensconced in an all-girls convent school in her native England. There she dreamed of becoming a famous writer, despite the fact that she was not very interested in her studies.

"Even then I knew how hard writing must be. It's really much harder than acting (perhaps I shouldn't say that), and the pay is shitty. But now that I'm writing screenplays there's more money in it."

She just finished a screenplay, a romantic comedy called *American Rhapsody*, which has been optioned. Apparently, she is serious about finding a career outside of acting despite

even her recent good notices in *Strange Behavior*.

"I have a fear of acting because it has been my experience that you often do not get offered the parts that you can be good in. You just take what you can get, and, in addition, I never became a star, which frankly pisses me off. There's only so long you can work at this game. You are either someone who just loves to act, or you are someone who wants to be a star. I'm the latter, and I haven't made it. I don't understand it and I think it's grossly unfair, mind you," she said flashing a grin like a Cheshire cat.

Lest you misjudge her, be assured that her statements were delivered in a thoroughly ironic tone. Lewis has a biting sense of humour and a sharp, self-deprecating wit that may be charming to most of us, but could conceivably be disturbing to film industry types, who appear to prefer more submissive actors.

Why did Lewis choose to work in pictures in the first place? "How I got into pictures?" she repeated, mocking my question a bit. "Well, I happened to meet Roman Polanski while I was working as a French interpreter, and he recommended me to a French producer who was looking for an English girl who could speak French to cast in a low-budget French film. So I thought, 'Why not be an actress?'

"Then I got a part in an Italian picture the title of which I cannot, or choose not, to remember."

Following that baptism of sorts and her part in *Fearless Vampire Killers*, Lewis landed a role in Dick Clement's *Otley* (1969) with Tom Courtenay and Romy Schneider. She got third billing

Nobody pouts like Fiona! In *Dr. Phibes Rises Again*, she plays the demure young wife of Robert *(Count Yorga)* Quarry, sworn enemy of Phibes. Below, Quarry struggles in a vain attempt to save Fiona from chicken-wire death!!!

PHOTOS: © 1972 AIP

PHOTO: © 1978 20TH CENTURY-FOX

PHOTO: © 1975 WARNER BROS.

As a manipulator of men in *The Fury*; as a seductive aristocrat in *Lisztomania*—*why isn't this woman a star?!?!!*

in James Clavell's *Where's Jack?* ("I didn't work for a year after that one," she said by way of criticism.) Robert Fuest's *Dr. Phibes Rises Again* followed.

"I remember working with Vincent Price who said he was only doing it because he loved the costumes, so I thought, 'This is right up my alley.' "

In the period between *Phibes* and *The Fury,* Lewis starred opposite Roger Daltry in Ken Russell's outrageous *Lisztomania,* a film she avoided discussing, despite the fact that Russell's fantasy stands a good chance of withstanding the test of time and is frequently revived in repertory theaters.

"I remember a press conference I was on for that film in New York with 50 journalists. They were all hysterical, screaming at me things like, 'How could you make this picture?' I said, 'It was just a job.' "

Actually, in a more serious vein, she explained that she believed Russell would make a marvelous horror film director because, as she put it, "he has such a bizarre mind."

Her recollection of *The Fury* is no fonder. "Brian told us he was going to make us all stars. As you know, that didn't quite work out. Plus I had to go through having a dummy of me made. Now Rick Baker is a marvelous man, but it was such a grueling experience because they had to make those casts. They immerse you section by section in plaster of Paris. It's awful, just awful," she said recalling the experience of making a replica of herself, which greets visitors to Rick Baker's studio because it now hangs from his ceiling.

"I remember sitting on the set of *The Fury* one day," she continued, "covered in pig's blood or something from head to foot. It was the lunch hour. I'd been in this blood for a week now, and there's John Cassavetes sitting next to me, also covered with this crap, and he says, "Aren't you glad you didn't go to acting school, Fiona?' "

She went on to describe the experience of being suspended for days in a harness for some of the film's levitation scenes. "They really only make those harnesses for boys, you know," she said hinting at the nature of her discomfort.

When I explained to her that our interview was destined to become a part of FANGORIA"s *Femme Fatale* series, she was ecstatic. "Oh, that's marvelous," she said. "I've always wanted to be a *femme fatale.* Instead, I've always been a jerk."

Although she was not a genre film fan as a child growing up in suburban England, Lewis could recall being so frightened by Jack Clayton's *The Innocents* (1961) as a girl that she couldn't climb her home stairs in the dark after seeing the film.

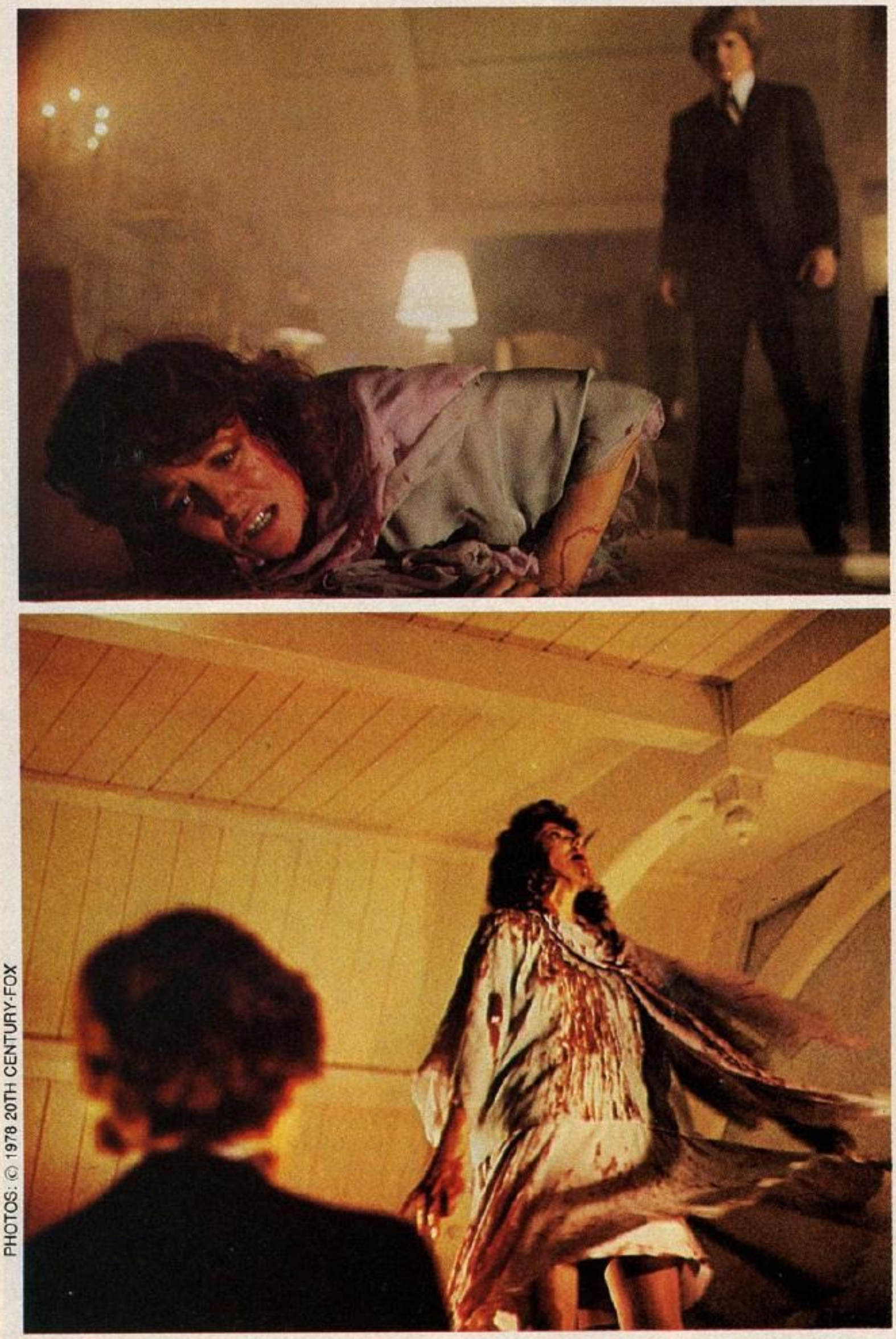
"I love horror films," she said. "But I don't like gory films. I don't mind doing films in which there is gore," she said in deference to *Strange Behavior*'s excesses in that department. "I would love to specialize in horror or fantasy films. I have no burning desire to play *Hamlet* or some such thing. I would simply like to work."

Originally from Essex, a rural area east of London, Fiona Lewis is an upper middle-class girl by birth. Her father is a judge. She was a rebellious adolescent. She fled from a convent school ("The nuns all had mustaches.") when she was 15 and spent a year skiing.

"The nuns didn't like me because I was frank," she said. "And I used to question the basis of religion. I was the one who'd raise her hand and ask, 'How can you prove . . .?' "

Fiona became involved with *Strange Behavior* (formerly titled *Dead Kids)* because she is a friend of Michael Laughlin's and because the script was funny. "I liked the story. People had funny lines and it starred Michael Murphy and Louise Fletcher. I'll always accept work with a director I think is smart who has a good idea."

Until that happens again, Fiona Lewis has returned to her typewriter. Can it be long before some enterprising young director sends her a good script? After reading her reviews for *Strange Behavior,* I would say that she doesn't have long to wait.

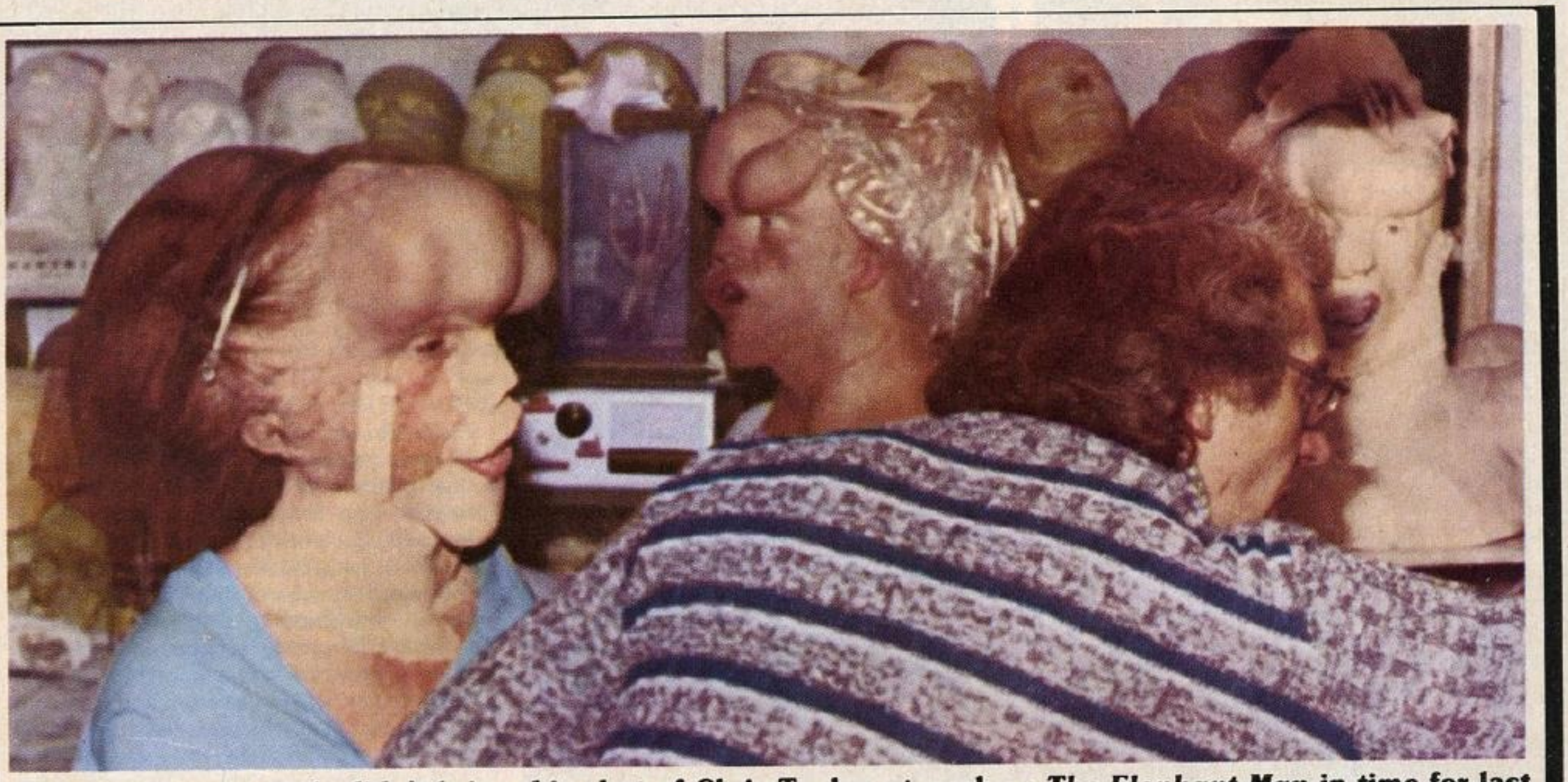


PHOTOS: © 1978 20TH CENTURY-FOX

Andrew Stevens (Stella's son) takes telekinetic vengeance on our heroine in dePalma's garbled epic, *The Fury.*

MONSTER INVASION

Up-to-the-minute warnings of what's coming your way!



The transatlantic mails didn't bring this shot of Chris Tucker at work on *The Elephant Man* in time for last issue's interview with the talented British makeup specialist. But better late than never, we say—here it is, in living color! Mr. Tucker also asks us to add credit for his two long-time assistants, Ms. Sinnika Ikaheimo and Mr. Stephen Grassby.

CREEPSHOW recently finished principal filming, and editor Bob Martin was lucky enough to be invited to Pittsburgh shortly after our last issue was put together. Friday, the 13th of November, was spent on the set, chatting up Rubinstein, Romero, King, Savini and E.G. Marshall as the movie's final segment was shot. The visit went quite well, until Martin killed one of Marshall's co-stars (he claims it was an accident). Luckily, it was only one out of a cast of thousands.

Bob's on-the-set coverage begins next issue; meanwhile, here's the run-down on the five stories contained in the film:

Father's Day: The simple story of a holiday family get-together; patriarch Nathan Grantham just wants to see that it's done-up right! Starring Carrie Nye and Viveca Lindfors.

The Lonely Death of Jordy Verril: A backwoods boy dreams of instant wealth when a meteor lands in his backyard. Based upon King's short story "Weeds," originally published in *Cavalier*, and starring Stephen King.

The Crate: The contents of a forgotten storage room at an Ivy League college could solve the domestic problems of a henpecked professor. Based on King's story, originally published in *Gallery* magazine, and starring Hal Holbrook, Adrienne Barbeau and Fritz Weaver.

E.G. Marshall makes short work of a tiny co-star in Romero's *Creepshow*.

PHOTO: © 1982 LAUREL ENTERTAINMENT

Something To Tide You Over: Betrayed by his beautiful wife, a jealous husband hatches an elaborate scheme of vengeance. Starring Leslie Nielsen.

They're Creeping Up On You: Hermetically sealed and computer-controlled, Upson Pratt's Manhattan penthouse is the perfect defense against the filth and vermin of the outside world . . . or so it seems. Starring E.G. Marshall and a cast of thousands.

VIDEODROME: We are absolutely panting to tell you all we've heard about this one, but the veil of secrecy is still officially in place, and we are honor-bound to respect it. One thing we guarantee—instead of exploding heads, Cronenberg will be blowing minds with this one, totally.

For now, it's officially OK to say that the story concerns cable pirates in the modern day, and their connections with a nefarious underground collective that has set out to turn that little box in your living room into the ultimate weapon!

VENOM, the first of many serpentine suspense films heading our way, promises to be one of the classiest straight thrillers in a long, long time. The story, based on Alan Scholefield's novel, concerns a young boy from a wealthy family who is held hostage in a London townhouse where, unknown to all, a deadly black mamba snake travels through its ventilation system. The casting is inspired—Klaus Kinski plays Jacmel, the kidnappers' despicable ringleader, Oliver Reed plays the family's treacherous chauffeur, and Susan George plays Louise, the family maid who is deeply involved in the plot. The good guys stack up pretty heavy as well—Sterling Hayden plays the grandfather of the kidnap victim, Sarah Miles plays an expert serpentologist involved in the case, and Nicol Williamson plays Detective Chief Superintendant Bulloch, who engages the kidnappers in a war of wits. Culture fans will know the director, Piers Haggard, as the fellow who directed the original TV version of Dennis Potter's *Pennies From Heaven.*

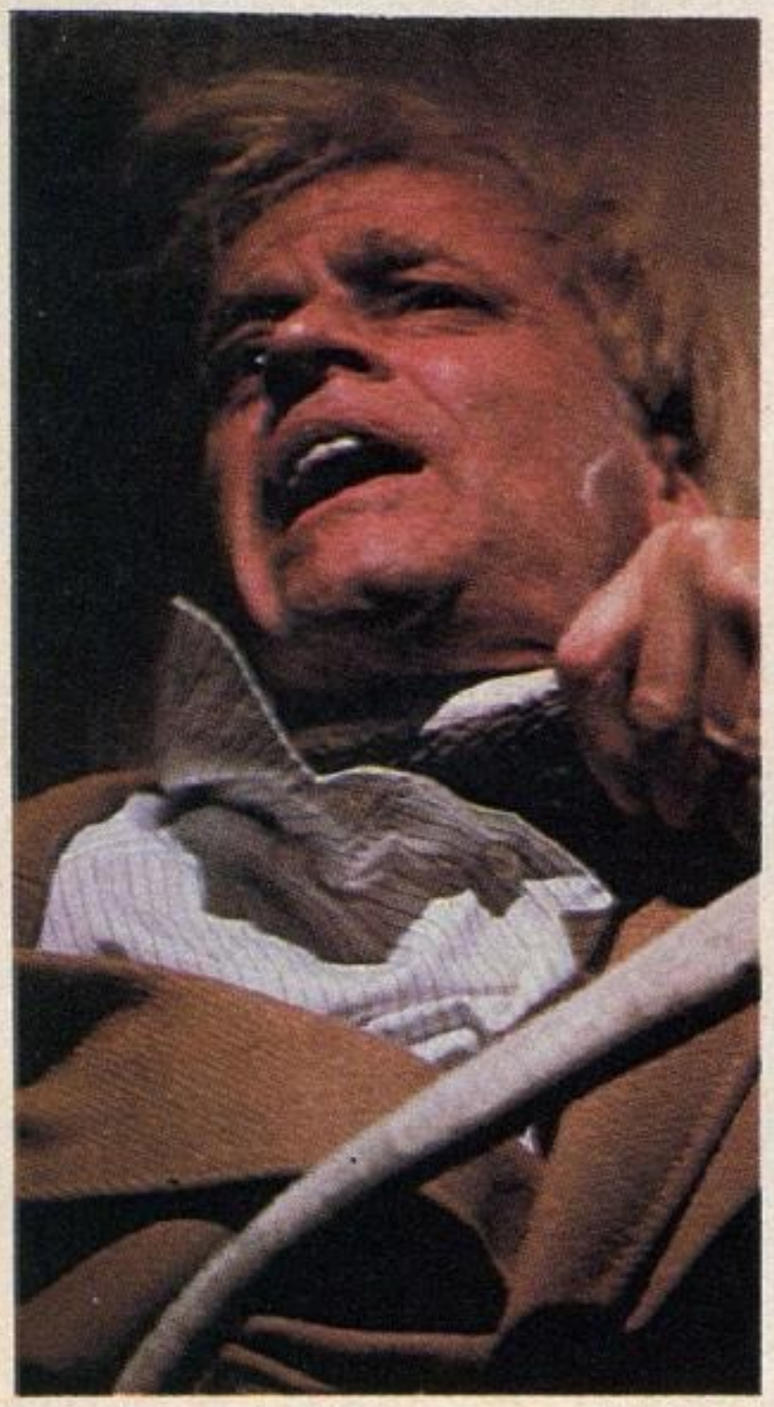


PHOTO: © 1982 PARAMOUNT

Klaus Kinski (see daughter, p. 11) has problems with his asp.

Jimmy McNichol (see sis on p. 14) has problems with his aunt.

MIKE FINNELL *(Rock 'n' Roll High School, The Howling),* one of everybody's favorite producers, is newly ensconced in an office at Universal, which will serve as his headquarters for two major projects. The first of these to go before the cameras will be *The Creature From The Black Lagoon,* in color and 3-D, helmed by the director of the original, Jack Arnold. John Landis, who has mentioned this project to us a few times in the past, is serving as executive producer, and Rick Baker's EFX, Inc. will be in charge of the gill-man! Nigel Kneale (of *Quatermass* fame) just recently completed a new version of the script.

Finnell's other project is to be directed by Joe Dante for Avco Embassy Pictures. Finnell and Dante have requested our silence on this one until the script is finalized (four screenplays have been rejected thus far), but the truly curious can find the basic premise in one of our back issues *(Monster Invasions,* Fango #9).

BUTCHER, BAKER, NIGHTMARE MAKER stars Jimmy McNichol, brother to Kristy, in a tale as lurid as a tabloid headline, guaranteed to free him of his "clean teen" image. Billy, a promising young athlete and candidate for a college scholarship, has lived with his Aunt Cheryl (Susan Tyrrell) since he was orphaned at the age of three. Aunt Cheryl is quite jealous and possessive of her young nephew, and her plans to keep him tied to her apron strings pull him into a tangled web of death and depravity. *Butcher, Baker* is not only a change-of-pace for McNichol, by the way—director William Asher first came to prominence as director of over 100 episodes of the classic *I Love Lucy* show as well as *Beach Blanket Bingo* and *How to Stuff a Wild Bikini!*

MICK GARRIS is a familiar name to our regular readers; at Avco Embassy Pictures, at the PR firm Pickwick Maslansky & Koenigsberg, and now at Universal Studios, his help and patience have been major factors in our coverage of the careers of John Carpenter, David Cronenberg, Joe Dante, Jamie Lee Curtis, John Landis and a host of others; he's also been the man to thank for the screenings of *An American Werewolf* and *Ghost Story* that have been arranged

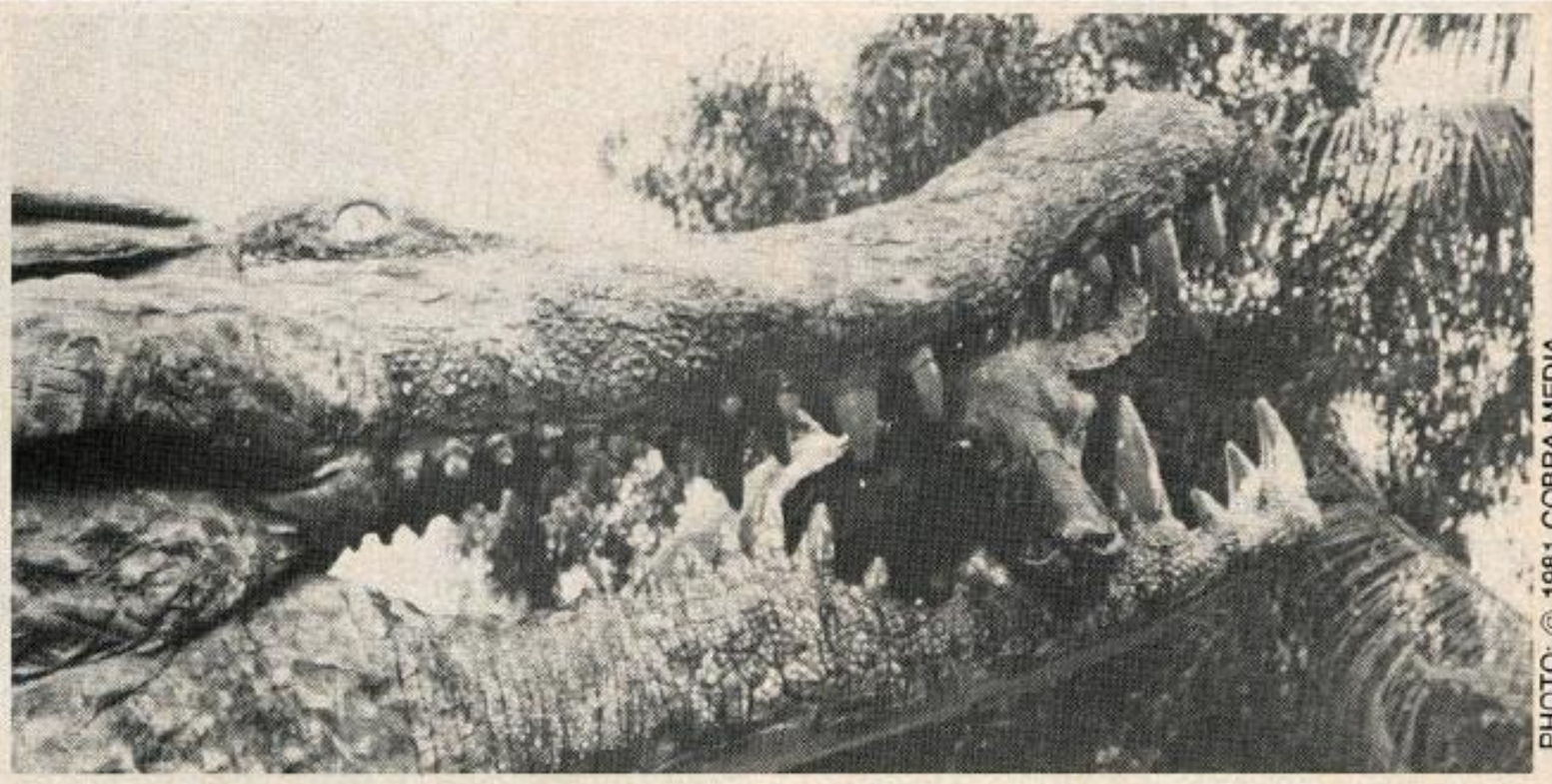


PHOTO: © 1981 COBRA MEDIA

Herman Cohen—the producer behind *I Was A Teenage Frankenstein* & lots more—currently has *Crocodile,* a bizarre Thai import, in release. More about this next issue!

for many of our subscribers in Seattle, Atlanta and New York.

In his new position at Universal, Garris is not only lending us the same generous hand; he's also producing, writing and directing brief promotional documentaries on the making of *The Thing* and *Videodrome;* and, for pay TV and home video, he and Robb Idels are producing a one-hour history of Universal science fiction and horror, compiling complete trailers from the Universal vaults. An unnamed "name" commentator will appear in the new footage, to be shot on the Universal lot, and lifelong monster maven John Landis will be lending a hand in some capacity as well.

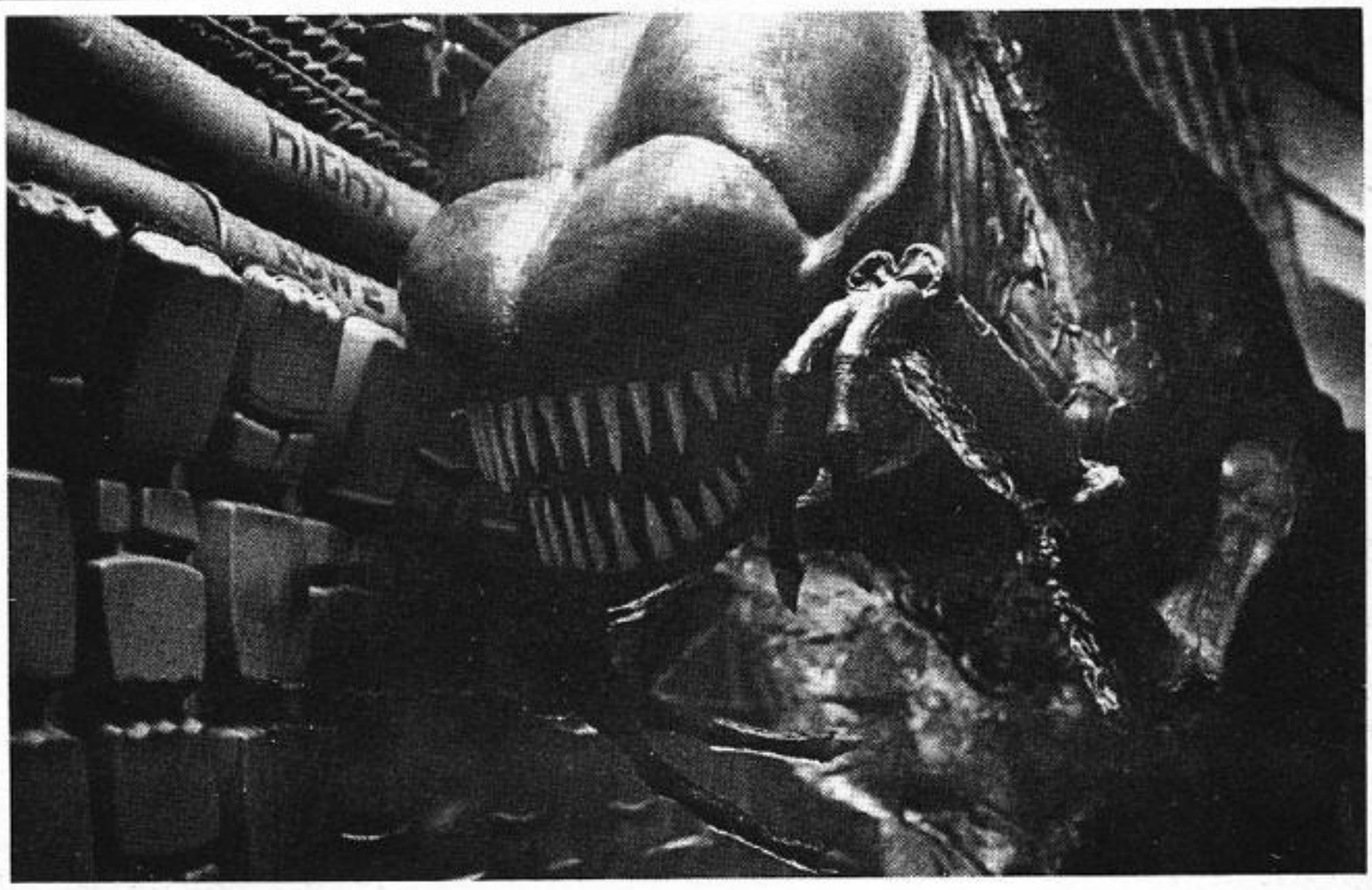
Garris is also using his experience in local L.A. television to get another project rolling—a syndicated television series that would deal with every aspect of SF and horror film. As we go to press, Garris is preparing to shoot the pilot for the series, a roundtable discussion of the genre moderated by Garris, with panelmembers Cronenberg, Carpenter and Spielberg!

ACADEMY AWARDS time approaches once again, which is something we've ignored over the last couple of years. However, a recent change in Academy policy warrants our close attention. For the first time in the organization's history, an award will be given in the category of film makeup. In the past, honorary awards have been given to William Tuttle for *7 Faces of Dr. Lao,* and to John Chambers for *Planet of the Apes,* but there has been no regular source of Academy recognition for the branch of film art responsible for such memorable images as the Frankenstein monster, the opera's Phantom, and the demon-possessed Regan.

All that has changed now—or has it? Nominations have not been announced as we write, though they will probably have been announced by the time you read this. In a year that's offered a wide range of makeup achievements to choose from, it will be interesting to see what turns up on the Academy's list.

THE BEASTMASTER: An unexpected tangle in business negotiations has lead Don Coscarelli to abandon plans to shoot his next film in Mexico. This turn of events, however, will not add any further delay to the long-awaited sword and sorcery epic; as of this writing, the sixth week of principal filming has begun in Los Angeles. Coscarelli's producer and co-writer Paul Pepperman tells us that the casting dilemma has been solved to everyone's satisfaction—Marc Singer (featured as a male topless dancing star in a recent TV movie) has the required physique to play Dar, the film's barbarian hero, "and, most importantly, he can act," says Pepperman. As romantic interest, angelic Tanya Roberts has been recruited, and Rip Torn plays one of Dar's barbaric foes. More about all this next issue!

Angelic Tanya Roberts!



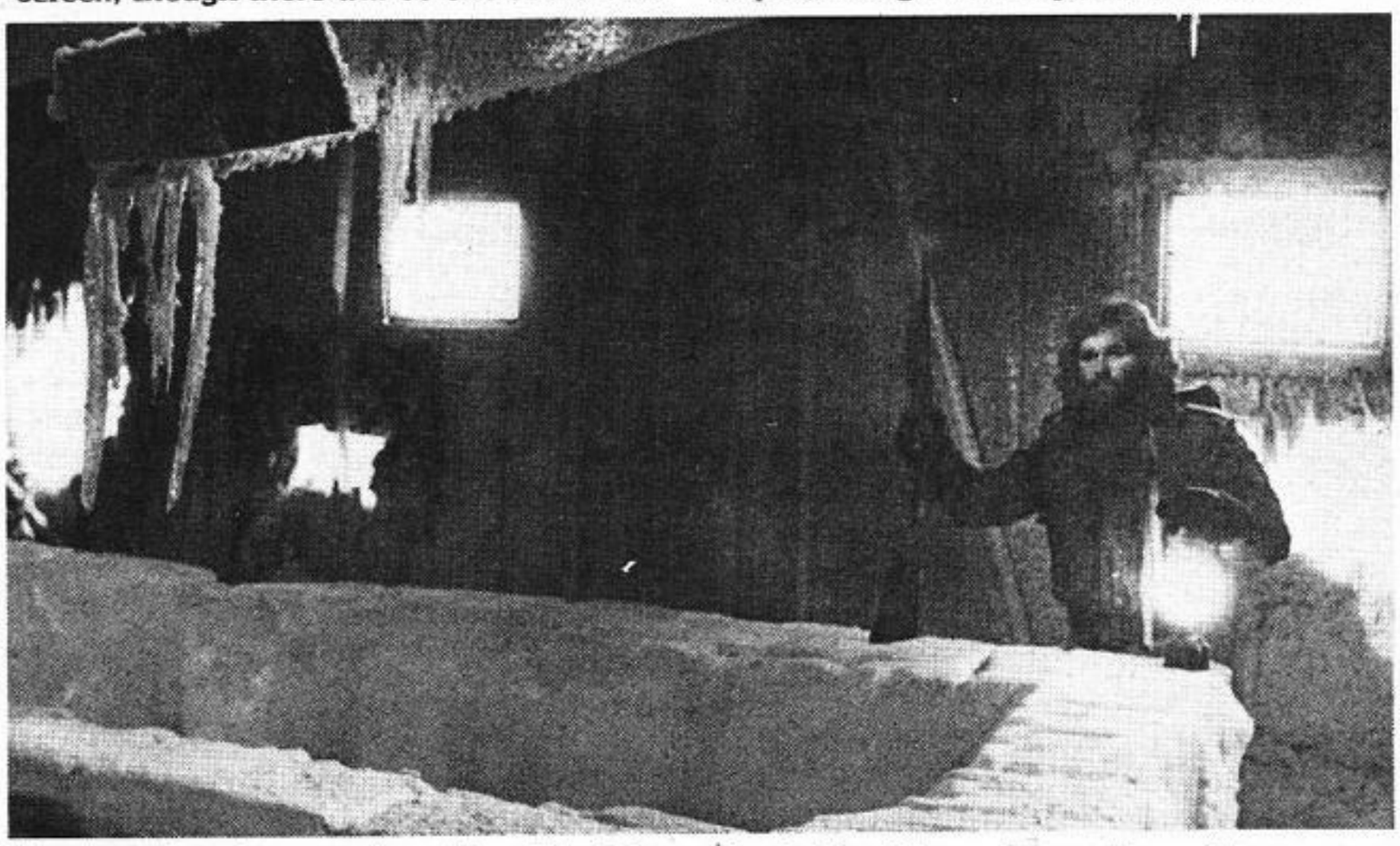
A DNA experiment run riot is the subject of *Mutant* from New World Pictures. In addition to the world's tinest sets, the film boasts a nifty critter by John Buechler (see issue #5).

PHOTO: © 1982 NEW WORLD PICTURES

THE THING just completed principal photography; just a few weeks after his return from Pittsburgh, our jet-set editor was graciously invited by publicity coordinator Peter Silberman (helped by a good word from Mick Garris) to Stewart, British Columbia, to witness location filming of the concluding sequences of John Carpenter's *The Thing!* Conditions at the remote mountain-top location were difficult, to say the least; we were lucky enough to miss the 20-below temperatures that had hit the day before we arrived; the 14-hour day that we shared with the crew was a toasty 10 or 15 above.

Because of the difficulties of the location, not much actual interviewing got done—we did get Hyderized, however (a story in itself), and some post-production interviews are now being scheduled, to be part of our total coverage of the film, starting next issue.

Meanwhile, an interesting note about the structure of the film, for those of you who have read the John Campbell story "Who Goes There?" which is the basis of the film. Bill Lancaster's script avoids using th epart of the story that was so well adapted for the Howard Hawks film; in this one, the thing has already been found and thawed by a neighboring camp, which has already been wiped out. The addition of this story device allows Carpenter's film to explore only that part of the story that is totally new to the screen, though there will be one scene that acts as a "flashback" to the Hawks film—though not in the conventional sense. As a result, the film is neither a remake nor a sequel, though it has qualities of both.



His gun aimed squarely at New World's mutant, Kurt Russell wonders where his thing has gone to. LATE FLASH: word just reached us that stop-motion work will supplement the FX work by Arbogast and Bottin!

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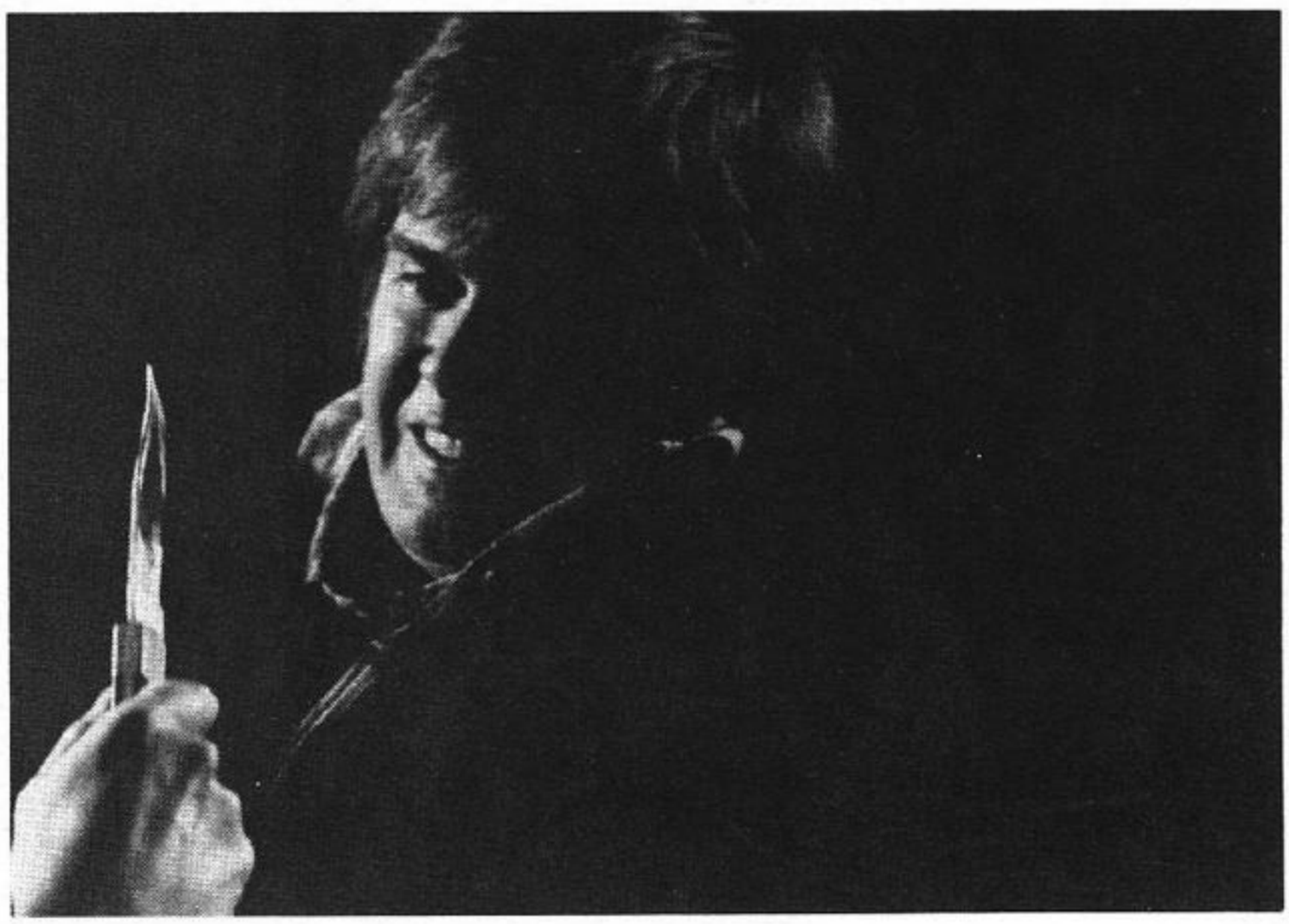
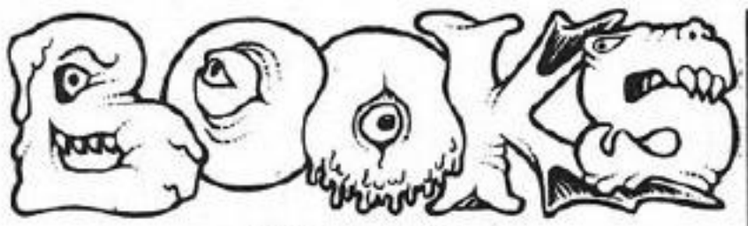
AVCO EMBASSY, by the way, has recently been purchased by Norman Lear, the avatar of bold television comedy. It's anybody's guess what this means to the world of aliens, monsters and bizarre creatures. It has reverted to its original company name, Embassy Pictures.

CARPENTER'S NEXT: It's time to play one of our favorite guessing games again! The last we heard, there were three possibilities—*El Diablo*, a sequel to *Escape From New York*, and King's *Firestarter*. Problems with EMI have made *El Diablo* unlikely, and it might be a bit too soon for an *Escape* sequel (nor can we be sure that Carpenter is anxious to return to 1997). That leaves *Firestarter*—but we wouldn't be at all surprised if some totally different project surfaces in the next couple of months. How's that for hedging our bets?

STAB: Robert Benton's Jacqueline-the-Ripper tale has been pushed back to a fall, '82 release. The official word is that Benton wants to do a bit of re-editing; it could be that Benton's decision to re-edit the completed film (which is pretty good, our over-active ears hear) has something to do with the fact that one of its stars recently revealed the surprise ending of *Stab* in the course of a press conference concerning a different picture.



Paul LeMat, star of *American Graffiti*, *Citizen's Band* (his best), and *Melvin and Howard*, struggles with a knife-wielding maniac in *Death Valley*, planned for release this month. LATE-BREAKING RUMOR: *Halloween III* is in the works.



The Searing
by John Coyne
Berkley Books, $2.95
Reviewed by Stanley Wiater

When it comes to trying to decide what makes a particular writer so successful in the field of Horror, there is no one simple qualification. People like Stephen King and Ramsey Campbell seem *born* to write in the genre. While others, such as Peter Straub and Charles L. Grant, are so talented it's apparent they would be successful even if they were writing cookbooks instead. A third group of best-selling writers (which some critics would say includes John Saul and Graham Masterson) is made up by those who realized early on "there's gold in them thar crypts!" and haven't seen any reason to quit until they've exhausted their tried-and-true motherlode.

It may be too early to put author John Coyne in the third category, though the popular success of his first two novels, *The Legacy* (a novelization of Jimmy Sangster's screenplay for the film of the same name) and *The Piercing*, have clearly enabled him to keep producing more. (His latest novel, *Hob-goblin*, was recently published in hardcover.) Coyne seems all too aware of the success of other writers in the field, and in lieu of developing a creative style of his own, at least knows which ingredients should be tossed in "the stew."

The Searing is a good example of a horror novel which never for a moment tries to go beyond the usual genre limitations and stereotypes. Coyne also is purposely going for the so-called "women's romance" market in switching one major cliche around—the wives in this novel are the strong, heroic types, while the husbands and the other men are presented as being insincere, insecure, or insignificant in terms of bringing to an end whatever is causing the mysterious occurrences in the newly built Renaissance Village. Occurrences central to the mystery include the bizarre deaths of children (including a month old baby), and a phenomenon which causes every woman in the Village to have a simultaneous super orgasm; orgasms, we are told, which will eventually prove fatal if the cause producing them and the deaths of the children is not quickly discovered.

Official Ballot!

FIRST ANNUAL FANGORIA MOVIE POLL!

MOVIE POLL TIME! We told you our next would be coming soon! We're going to try to do this every year—get our readers' judgements about the best & worst that the terror field had to offer. The nominations appearing on our ballot were chosen by our subscribers, who received a nominating ballot along with issue #16. You are not required to cast your vote for the nominees on the ballot, you may instead choose to write your choice in the space provided. The nominees are listed to simplify the matter of counting your votes! There are no nominations in the makeup category—we actually forgot to include this category on the nominating ballot! However, we're sure you've already got a few favorites in mind.

Circle one and only one choice in each category—voting twice in one category will make your vote worthless. The FANGORIAN OF THE YEAR should be the person that you believe has contributed the most to the world of terror over the past year. Votes for FANGORIA's editors will not be counted (but thanks, anyway!). Have your ballot in our offices by March 15 (the address is on the letters page).

Best Film of 1981

An American Werewolf in London
The Howling
My Bloody Valentine
Escape From New York
The Funhouse
Halloween 2
Raiders of the Lost Ark
Scanners
Wolfen

Other: _____

Best Screen Story

An American Werewolf in London
Halloween 2
Clash of the Titans
Dead & Buried
Deadly Blessing
Ghost Story
The Howling
Scanners
Wolfen

Other: _____

Best Direction

An American Werewolf in London
Wolfen
Escape From New York
The Funhouse
Halloween 2
The Howling
Scanners
Raiders of the Lost Ark
Knightriders

Other: _____

Worst Film

Altered States
My Bloody Valentine
Comin' At Ya
Fear No Evil
Friday the 13th, Pt. 2
The Funhouse
Final Exam
Ghost Story
Halloween 2
Maniac
Screamers
Without Warning

Other: _____

Best Makeup Artist: _____

FANGORIAN OF THE YEAR

Rick Baker
Rob Bottin
John Carpenter
John Carradine
Roger Corman
Wes Craven
David Cronenberg
Jamie Lee Curtis
Debra Hill
John Irvin
Stephen King
John Landis
Herschell Gordon Lewis
George Romero
Tom Savini
Dick Smith
Stephen Spielberg
Peter Straub
Chris Walas

Other: _____

What does Coyne have as the cause? Why, a young adolescent girl with psychic powers, of course. Certainly this plot development fits in perfectly with the other stereotypes of an independent lady doctor (who still needs a man to love, naturally) a handsome investigative reporter for *The Washington Post*, and the not-too-bright police detective. All of these characters are shuffled through Coyne's plot-line shamelessly, with their only motivations seeming to be how upset they become when there's a new demise occurring in every other chapter.

If there is anything different in *The Searing* from a hundred other novels of this sort, it's that Coyne attempts not a supernatural explanation at the end, but an even less believable one that's science fictional in nature. For, instead of the girl being possessed by demons, she's actually part of a "mind-link" with extraterrestrial beings from the far side of the universe! It's interesting to note that not only do the characters in the novel believe the idea is ridiculous, but one has the feeling that Coyne threw in the extraterrestrial angle just so he could claim to have at least *one* different (if not wholly original) idea while playing it totally safe with every other cliche.

At a recent convention, Coyne admitted, "I have no ideas about trends at all, except that I seem to have gotten into writing horror fiction sideways and stumbled forward, almost by accident, from one book to another. Only in *Hob-goblin* did I start thinking seriously about trying to do something different or unusual or new." When an editor advised him that supernatural novels were part of a trend which was on its way out, Coyne figured the next trend "would be the New Occult, which would be science fiction. So I tried to bridge the two gaps with *The Searing*." Perhaps one would be better off reading *Hob-goblin*, as Coyne claims it to be his first "serious" work of fiction. Even though he doesn't deny the original idea for this book came from the immensely popular *Dungeons & Dragons* fantasy games, which of course Coyne sees as the next big "trend."

Coyne also believes that writers of horror fiction should deal with topics which are currently very much a part of our lives—"picking up on all the horrible things which happen in our newspapers and giving them another twist by making them into a horror novel, that's the area I'm most comfortable in, and I'm working in." This is a worthwhile sentiment, though the thought comes to mind: if you can continue to sell to the public gold painted bricks, is there ever a reason to try and write a novel produced purely from gold?

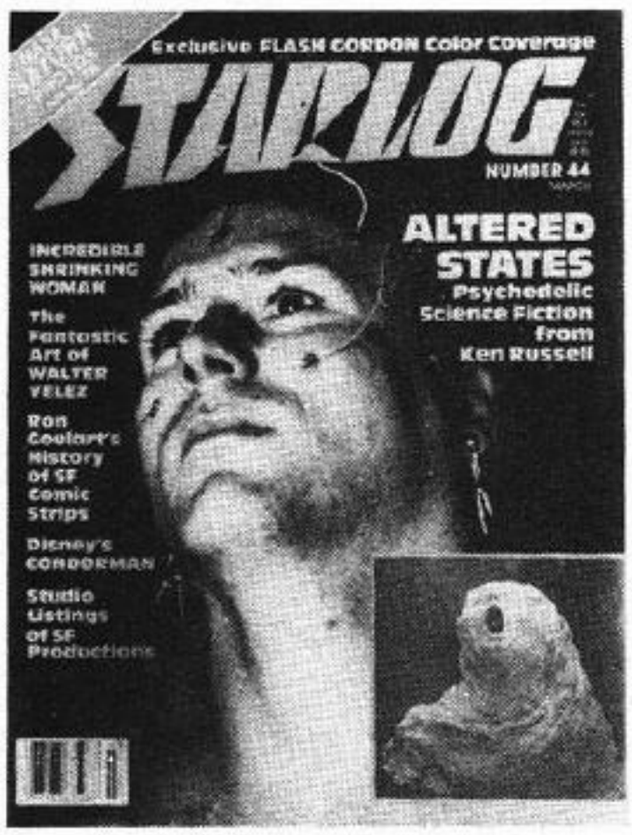
Off Season
by Jack Ketchum
Ballantine Books, $2.50
Reviewed by Stanley Wiater

Rest assured, *Off Season* precisely fits the *Webster's Dictionary* definition of the term horrible: "exciting or tending to excite horror; very disagreeable; dreadful; terrible; shocking; hideous; excessive." And depending on one's point of view, this review can be considered either a great recommendation or a vile condemnation. For *Off Season* is to literature what *Maniac* and *Friday the 13th* are to cinema—a splatter novel.

Totally brutal and unrelentingly explicit in its description of violence, *Off Season* could not have been written unless its author had first been schooled in several screenings of assorted splatter films. Just consider the novel's threadbare plot-line: five New York sophisticates—three men and two women—drive to a coastal town in Maine to spend the weekend. Upon arrival, they are

(Continued on Page 66)

HERE IT IS!



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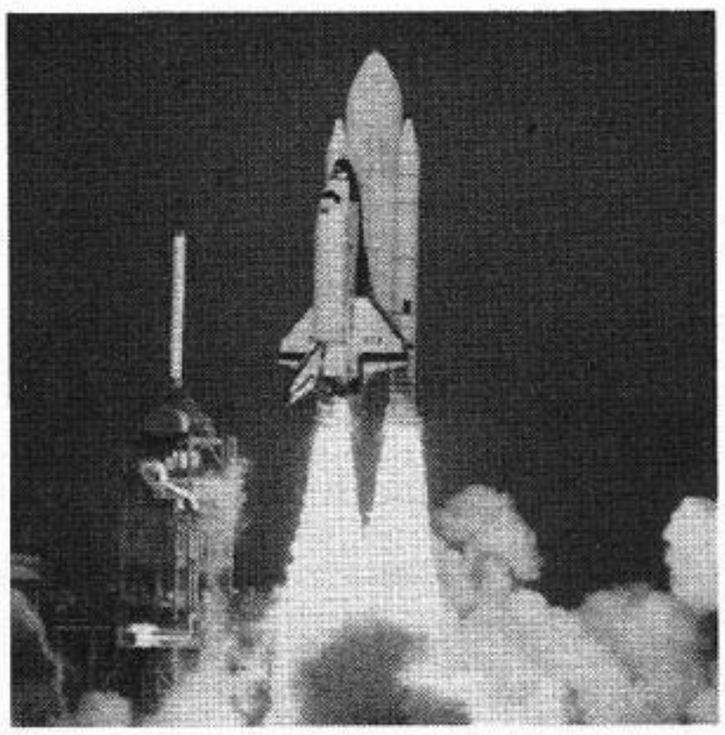
STARLOG /57 takes you behind-the-scenes on the making of a new SF/adventure flick, *Megaforce,* due to be released this summer.

If you are (or were) a fan of the *Lost In Space* teleseries, you're going to love our special feature, *Warning, Warning!,* about the *LIS* Robot. Included are interviews with the Robot's designer, operator and "voice," as well as a look at its original concept sketches.

Fans of science fiction and fantasy art will find two heavyweights of the field in STARLOG #57: the dean of space art, Chesley Bonestell, and the designer of *ALIEN* and *Conan,* Ron Cobb.



Also included in the issue is an interview with the first lady of horror, Caroline Munro, a photo feature of the second flight of the Space Shuttle and a pull-out poster from *Star Wars.*

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I would like to hear from all Godzilla-Toho monster, Dr. Who and Kolchak fans. Write Steve Field, 6495 Poplar Hill Ln., E. Amherst, NY, 14051.

Please send in your best-worst movie lists to: Chris Ewing, 4195 Beverly La., N.E. Atlanta, GA, 30342—Fango's the Best.

Brian DePalma fans write—George Moreno Jr, 7918 Glen Garden, San Antonio TX 78224.

WANTED: Real gory photos! Send to Gary Sutton, 278 Evane Dr., Depew, NY 14043.

WANTED: Plasmatics and Munro fans for blood pals: Kent Rudolph, 6491 Chebucto Rd., Halifax, N.S., Canada B3L-1L3.

All Jamie Lee Curtis fans write to me. Tony Feddeler; 2538 W. Estes, Chicago, IL 60645.

Michelle, I have loved you all the time—Rob.

Hi Mike, I finally got FANGORIA, the best mag. Paul Evans.

Rick Baker—You are the best; loved *An American Werewolf in London,* looking forward to more!

WANTED: Anything about *Raiders of the Lost Ark* or Harrison Ford. M. Walker, 2909 River Dr., Beaufort, SC 29902.

To Dick Smith, Rick Baker & all other makeup wizards. Teach me your craft! Marlene Stoller, 904 Winnington Ave, Ottawa Canada (613) 596-1577.

To FANGORIA: You got the best magazine. Denis Sequin, Quebec.

To Doreen, Al, the staff and readers of Fangoria (and everyone else) May all the horrors you see be viewed from a theater seat. Happy Holidays, Seasons Greetings.

In Memorium: Wally Wood. Bang! George Sanders. Whimper . . .

—T.S. Eliot

Drop (dead) a card; It's lonely in hell. Alex Colonna, 6712 21st Ave., Brooklyn, NY 11204

I have 9 "Howling" and 10 "Heavy Metal" small theater posters. I want to share, first come . . . Melanee Elanee, 10614 Toulon, Cincinnati; Ohio 45240

Princess Diane Fan Club: Send S.A.S.E. to Buckingham Palace, UK. Our punchline: She heard that rulers are a foot long.

WANTED: Pictures and information on *Mother's Day, New Years Evil,* and *Happy Birthday to Me.* Darrell Vail, 54 Maple Ave, Warwick NY 10990.

ALACYN—I have always loved you. Goodbye—CAMPBELL.

WANTED: to trade or buy used sup. 8 sound horror films reasonable. Bob Ruiz, 1601 Park Ave., Room 1009, Omaha, NE 68105.

Want to correspond with all rabid Roddy McDowall Fans. Write: Ms. Yalita Bennett, 131 Moore St., 13-F, Brooklyn, NY 11206.

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I'd like a pen pal. My name is Chris Clarke, 5266 Indian River Rd., North Vancouver, B.C. V7G-IL3.

Monster makers—got talent? Send pics. Haunted House Co., G. Mahana, 21 Pineview Dr., Toms River, NJ 08753.

Jolee Marie: You make my dreams come true. Love, your old Goon.

WANTED: BB cards 1948-1967. Also mags on horror, monsters, etc. to J. Vaunatta, 27 Brewster Dr., Gales Ferry, CT 06335.

WANTED: One girls with looks like Jamie Lee. From the ages of 22 to 30. Write to M. Holden, Rt 2 Box 7, Hayesville, NC 28904.

Have written an original horror screenplay. Want to market. Film companies contact Jamie Browr, 212 E. 47 St., #7A, New York, NY 10017, 212-688-6652.

Red: I will love you forever and a day!—Eve

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To Bap 9000, Jack, Ralph, the Pope, Pat, Jeff, Lisa, Nancy, Ferret, and Slime. Best from JAM.

Beware the alligator cult! Boycott LaCoste.

College senior, 21, gore thesis research. All write, give age, positive/negative. Gorgeous girls send photo. DS, 21 Baker Ave., S. Glens Falls, NY 12801.

G. Gordon Liddy Fan Club: Place S.A.S.E. under third trash can on right. Get free candle & sterile handgun. Mike Hammer, Pres.

I loved *An American Werewolf in London.*

HORROR FANS: Looking to hear from all of the other horror, sci fi fans. Will write to all! Jose Arocho, 271 E. 164 St. Bronx, NY 10456.

This is an Xmas present for Bill. Hope he likes it. His Mom.

WANTED: Posters, photos, books, etc. from *Halloween II, Texas Chainsaw Massacre.*

Make room Brian DePalma and John Carpenter, you're the greatest but I'm coming up. Kip Hanks, 7405 LaQuinta Dr., Pensacola, FL 32506.

Looking for rare R.G. Armstrong memorabilia. Ready to trade entire official Dub Taylor collection. Meet me in Des Moines.

Rock music and horror movie fans, write to 499 NE Williams Rd, Gresham, Or 97030.

Hey Dave—didn't think you would ever get your name in here did ya! Dan.

May video never kill movies!

HORROR FANS—Wanting a pen pal write to: Jim O'Rcar, 3160 West 70th Pl, Anchorage, Alaska 99502—Also would like monster pictures.

Hello FANGORIA from Eric W. Brian Z., Tom Z., Erik R. Thanks Mom, for the subscription.

Richard Fuller, Box 1245 Kayenta, AZ 86033, Boy 15, likes horror, sci-fi, & fantasy movies, wants pen pals.

Long live monster movies and FANGORIA.

Ladies, foxes, vamps and zombiettes: I want to hear from you! D.L. Bogart, 1300 Oak #2, Rolla, MO 65401. And remember, KMNR rocks Rolla!

Like to hear from War Film buffs, fans of Sam Peckinpah/Bonnie Franklin; Canadian opinions! Bob Hale 99 Glenview Ave, Greensburg PA 15601.

Happy 15th Birthday, Ty. We love you.

Looking for old DC comic books for trade. J. Volpe, 442 Gatewood Ct., G.B., MD 21061.

Mark Kirkpatrick will respond to any letter about anyTHING! 295 Fernbank Rd #10, Springfield, MA 01129.

Maniac Sleazy? No way! Savini is Great! Don't "Zorro" out on us Tom . . . Please?!?!

Happy Birthday Garry! WANTED: Info on Herschel Gordon Lewis. Vanessa Fleming 940 S. Figueroa, Los Angeles, CA 90015 (I want his movies!)

Would like to correspond with pretty female horror fan around the age of 17 to 21. Write to Mark Whitaker, RR4, Macomb IL 61455.

Carpenter and Hill forever!

I'm a horror nut! Chance Smith, 345 North Mulberry, Logan, Ohio 43138.

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Basket Case

(Continued from Page 30)

can reach a cross-over audience if the violence isn't there, if it's more like a comedy. To me, cutting the violence makes no more sense than cutting the comedy. They go hand in hand—the extent of the violence makes the comedy work that much more.

"The other thing is that I meant the film to work both as horror and as comedy, and there's one very gruesome horror scene that they will leave in, where the monster is attacking the girl. I'm afraid that the cutting may make it play like a comedy, and that people will think that the scene is my idea of humor; it's not. It was meant as straight-out, grotesque horror."

The cutting of the film's violence was not discussed with Henenlotter before the distribution deal was sealed, and he is in no way involved with the cutting. "Nor would I want to be," he says, "and distributors can never guarantee what their marketing approach will be beforehand. They may not have known themselves."

Henenlotter still maintains a sense of balance about Analysis Releasing's plans for *Basket Case*. "They could be right; we could have a wildly popular film. They know the exhibitors, and their own business. And, they always have the option of putting some of the cut footage back."

But, before that possible occurrence, the Analysis version of *Basket Case* will be in release. As of this writing, midnight show previews are planned to start in early February—about the time that this issue hits the stands. It is our expectation, and our strong hope, that a good deal of the originality and hard work put into *Basket Case* will shine through.

Henenlotter's second theatrical feature is now on the boards; how soon it goes before the cameras depends in part on how successful *Basket Case* turns out to be. Its title remains secret for now, but we can say that it's a thriller in the distinctive Henenlotter style. "It will be about someone who has either supernatural powers, or has lost control of their bodily functions," says the writer-director. "And it will be a very violent film, but it will have no blood. And the ratings board, or anyone else inclined to cut it, will have no idea what to do with it."

Belial's most twisted scene remsins intact. *But it's no joke!*

STILL A FEW LEFT!

Yes, there are still a few of you who have not yet taken us up on our offer to sell you back issues of THE WORLD'S GREATEST HORROR FILM MAGAZINE!

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Ormsby

(Continued from Page 43)

film was made and released as *Dead of Night*, "the same title as the venerable British anthology film," says Ormsby. "I wasn't terribly pleased about that, but at least it was better than *The Night Andy Came Home.*"

Though it won a few festival awards and developed something of a cult following in Europe, *Dead of Night* was lost in the grindhouses here in the U.S.—at the time, not much attention was being paid to independent horror films. Lately, however, it has turned up again, with yet another title, *Deathdream*, on local TV stations across the country, at last finding an audience. The plot, derived in part from William W. Jacobs' classic story "The Monkey's Paw," concerns Andy (Richard Backus), just returned from the Vietnam War to the home of his loving mother. Andy's mom, his girl and his best buddy all detect a change in Andy—something cold, distant and secretive. None but the audience suspect that Andy is, in fact, dead, and has only been brought home by the prayers of his mother.

Again, Ormsby executed the makeups for the film, assisted by a young man whose primary makeup background had been in theater. His name was Tom Savini. "He's a great guy, very talented and very entertaining to be with," says Ormsby. "After *Dead of Night,* he came with us to Canada and executed all the makeups, under my supervision, for *Deranged.*"

Deranged had its start when Ormsby, wanting to use his makeup skills to create a monster for a picture he was about to launch, was hired by another Canadian producer who had seen *Children*. When that project fell through, the producer called upon Clark and Ormsby to co-direct a film that would tell once more the story of Ed Gein—the real-life mass murderer who similarly inspired *Psycho* and *Texas Chainsaw Massacre*. "When I read the actual material on Gein—for instance, there was quite a spread in *LIFE* magazine about 30 years ago that you can find in the library—it was truly horrifying stuff, so horrifying that it could only be dealt with as black comedy, and that's how it was written. We shot that script, with the Gein figure brilliantly played by Robert Blossom. I like that picture very much, except for one major flaw. Ed Gein actually was a victim of his own hallucinations—he never realized he was killing those people; he thought he was gutting a deer as he cut into his victims. So, for much of the movie, it really doesn't seem like a horror film, because it's played for black comedy; the final sequence was written for him to be stalking a woman, convinced that he was hunting deer—we would cut away from Blossom to the shots of the deer. But then, because of the budget and scheduling, we weren't able to get the deer footage for that last sequence, and instead it became the relentless stalking of this woman. We'd established him for the full length of the film as a sort of innocent who has no idea what he was doing, but then in the end he became suddenly vicious. Nevertheless, when it opened I was very pleased to see that Vincent Canby caught it at some theater on 42nd Street and wrote a little piece in the New York *Times* about how much he liked it."

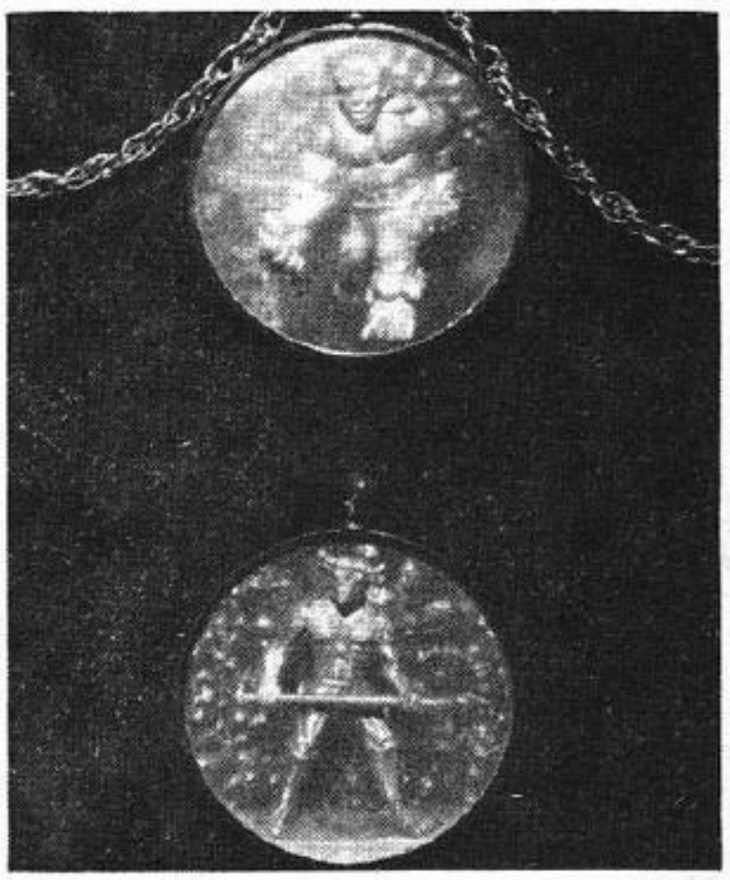
Despite Ormsby's pronounced affection for his own horror films—particularly *Dead Of Night* and *Deranged*—he says that he doesn't think of himself as a horror filmmaker. His tastes in horror lean toward the old classics, particularly the early Universal horrors, rather than more recent efforts. "I still love a good horror film, but unfortunately horror films lately haven't been so good, with a few exceptions, like *ALIEN* and *The Howling*.

"Unfortunately, a lot of the filmmakers working now don't really know how to create a progression—it's just event after event after event, with no third act." Concerning the trend toward violence, Ormsby takes an example of its proper and effective use, the film *Scanners*. "That picture had a lot of content, and the violence was there more as imagery than as violence." As the parent of 14-year-old Ethan, Ormsby has no compunctions about letting him read the *Cat People* script (see "The Postal Zone," issue #15), and Ethan will certainly see the film as well, sex and violence intact. "But I would never let him see *Maniac,*" qualifies Ormsby, "or any other film that concerns solely the killing of innocent young victims. I would never make a film like that; *Deranged* may have bordered on that in some ways, but it had something else going for it, in that the emphasis was not the gore.

"But ultimately, I think that you can make a movie about anything. It's not so much what the film is about as it is the *way* that you do it."

*Blood a la Ormsby: To one cup of Karo syrup, add one teaspoon of red food coloring, one teaspoon of yellow food coloring, and a single *drop* of blue food coloring. Stir, then add a teaspoon of red, non-toxic tempera poster-paint. Mix thoroughly, and you have Blood a la Ormsby. This stuff stains like crazy, so watch it! As Ormsby says in his book, "you shouldn't mix up this recipe unless your parents say it's OK." Then again, what they don't know won't hurt you.

PUT A MONSTER AROUND YOUR NECK



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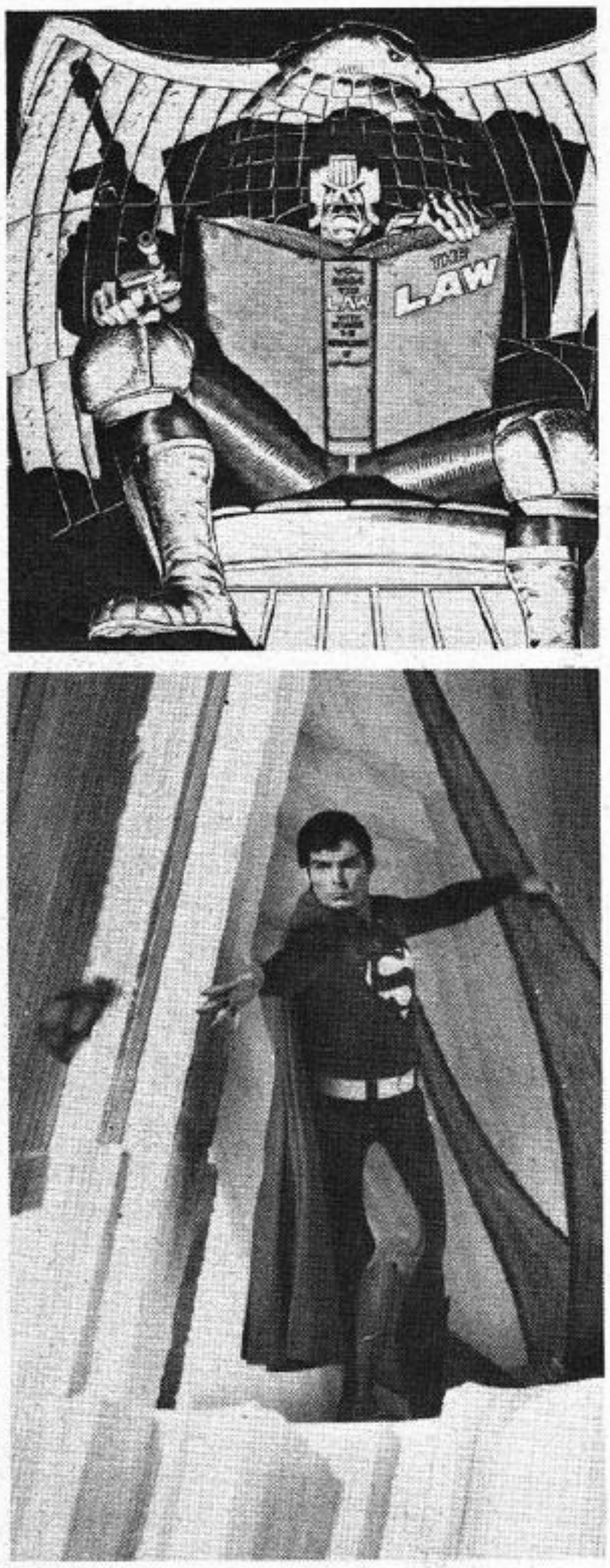

What better way to start our second issue than by doing an in-depth interview with Jack Kirby, the undisputed King of Comics? Editor-in-chief Howard Zimmerman spoke with Kirby in his California home about a career that has spanned over 40 years and what lays ahead in the future.

"If you don't go to bed, Judge Dredd will get you!" Who is Judge Dredd? Find out in this revealing look at Britain's premiere comic character who is a combination judge, jury *and* executioner!

The secret behind *Superman III* is unveiled in an exclusive interview with screenwriters David and Leslie Newman. The duo also talk about their solo projects featuring *Sheena, Queen of the Jungle* and the *Shadow*.

Also, a look at Eclipse Enterprises, John Byrne talks about creator's rights, an examination of Marvel's new contracts and an look at the upcoming Carl Barks book.

M.I.

(Continued from Page 61)

set upon by a family of cannibals, who have been inbreeding for generations inside a cliff dwelling that borders the town. This family of cannibals has been living off of wild animals in the woods—and whatever unlucky vacationers they happened to come across. The entire novel takes place within a 72-hour time span, beginning with the arrival of the "city slickers" to the final bloody mop-up by the local police authorities.

The basic tone of the novel can best be compared to the line used in advertising the film *The Texas Chainsaw Massacre:* "Who will survive—and what will be left of them?"

Indeed, this entire review could be used in comparing scenes in the novel to other splatter films. The major difference, of course, is that author Ketchum has to describe in print what a George Romero or David Cronenberg must visualize on the screen. Here is one of the milder examples, pulled at random: "She withdrew, moving back as close as possible to the wall until there was nowhere left to go and she had to suck in her stomach when she felt it again, and still the blade advanced, pressing forward. She felt her flesh retreat and tighten against the slow, even pressure, the growing ache, and then the sudden shock of agony as the tip of the knife invaded her soft flesh. In the cool air of the cave her body felt moist and she knew she was bleeding. The knife stopped but did not withdraw, and her flesh closed over it."

And this occurs to one of the few characters who somehow manages to *survive* through all the carnage. There are scenes in *Off Season* which are too obscene in their explicit detailing of horror to mention here. One would have to go back to the works of the Marquis de Sade to appreciate what Ketchum attempts to do. For example, this is the fate he has in store for his leading female character, Carla. Not only is she attacked while having sex with her boyfriend (and in what films hasn't this occurred before?), but after her boyfriend is killed on the spot, Carla is dragged outside by other members of the "family." In full view of the remaining inhabitants of the house, she is then strung up like some farm animal over a large pot of boiling oil. Her eventual fate (and this is the main character, no less): to be first disemboweled—and then devoured!

There's every reason to believe that "Jack Ketchum" is not the real name of the author (the book is copyrighted by one Dallas Mayr), which says something as to how much (or little) recognition Ketchum desires from this in the long run. Again depending upon one's point of view, what is most distressing about *Off Season* is that Ketchum does bother to *tell a story.* In spite of the repulsive explicitness of his descriptions, Ketchum is no mere "hack." He knows how to set up suspenseful situations, is able to create immediately recognizable characters—and most importantly—possesses that special ability to make the reader keep turning to the next page.

Yet to what end? Where most writers would be content to spend a sentence or at most a paragraph detailing the demise of a character, Ketchum will devote an *entire chapter* to their savage rapes and tortures. (Following the morals of some of the splatter films, the women in this novel are treated even more abominably than anyone else.) The cliche with the splatter films is that they supposedly challenge us to see how much we can "take" before closing our eyes or turning away. Ketchum works toward a similar purpose. Just when you think the worst has already happened—rape, decapitation, mutilation, cannibalism—the author goes yet another shock further. One almost has to force himself to read through to the end, which may have been the author's intention from the very start.

But the bottom line must still be that *Off Season* is not going to bore its readers. Actually, the novel would also make one hell of a motion picture since it's already incorporated every theme made popular by the splatter films. But remember how novels used to be advertised as a "book you can't put down" once you began reading? *Off Season* dares you to pick it up. . . .

Things to Come

It looks like the next one is shaping up as another "theme issue," the theme being Summer Previews! Our editor, just returned from the sets of *Creepshow* and *The Thing,* will certainly have a few words to say about those anxiously-awaited films; we've arranged to speak with director Don Coscarelli and co-writer Paul Pepperman about *The Beastmaster,* which recently completed filming; and Earl Owensby, who recently announced that his North Carolina film company is planning 10 3-D films for release over the next five years, will be the subject of our first feature coverage on the new wave of 3-D films—provided that our attempt to get ahold of him works out! Also on tap is a talk with Herman B. Cohen, the producer of *Target Earth, I Was A Teenage Werewolf, Horrors of the Black Museum, A Study In Terror* and many others. Cohen will be discussing all of these, as well as his entry into the field of modern terror—*Watch Me When I Kill.* Topping it all off will be a colorful look at the work of Mike Ploog—a premier comic artist who left the world of four-color pulp to become one of Hollywood's leading production artists! If you're not there, we'll start without you!

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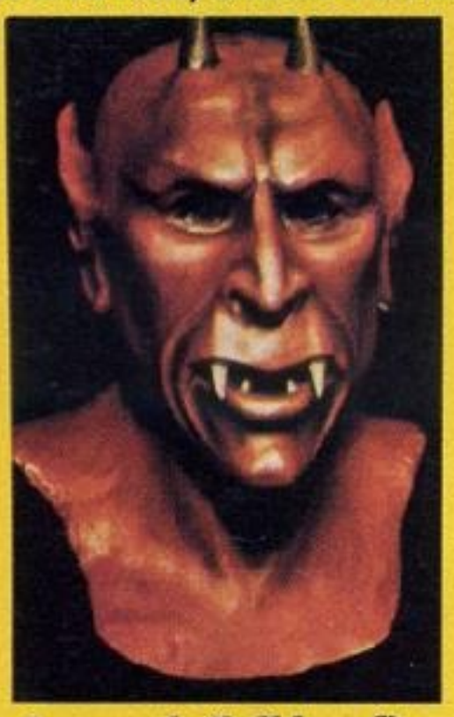

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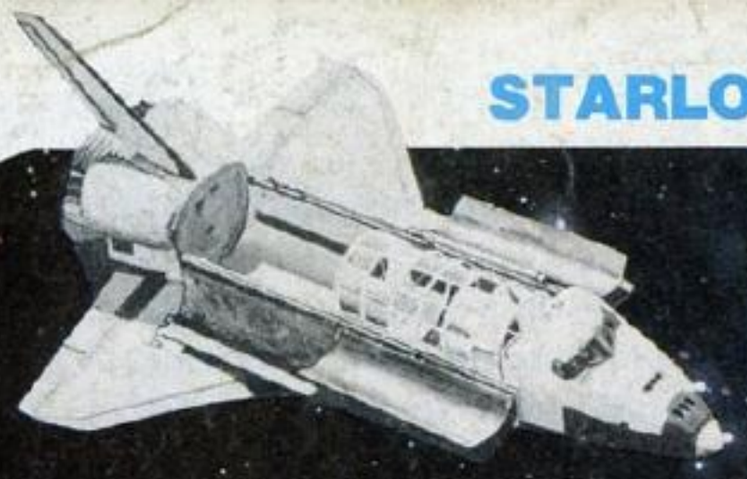

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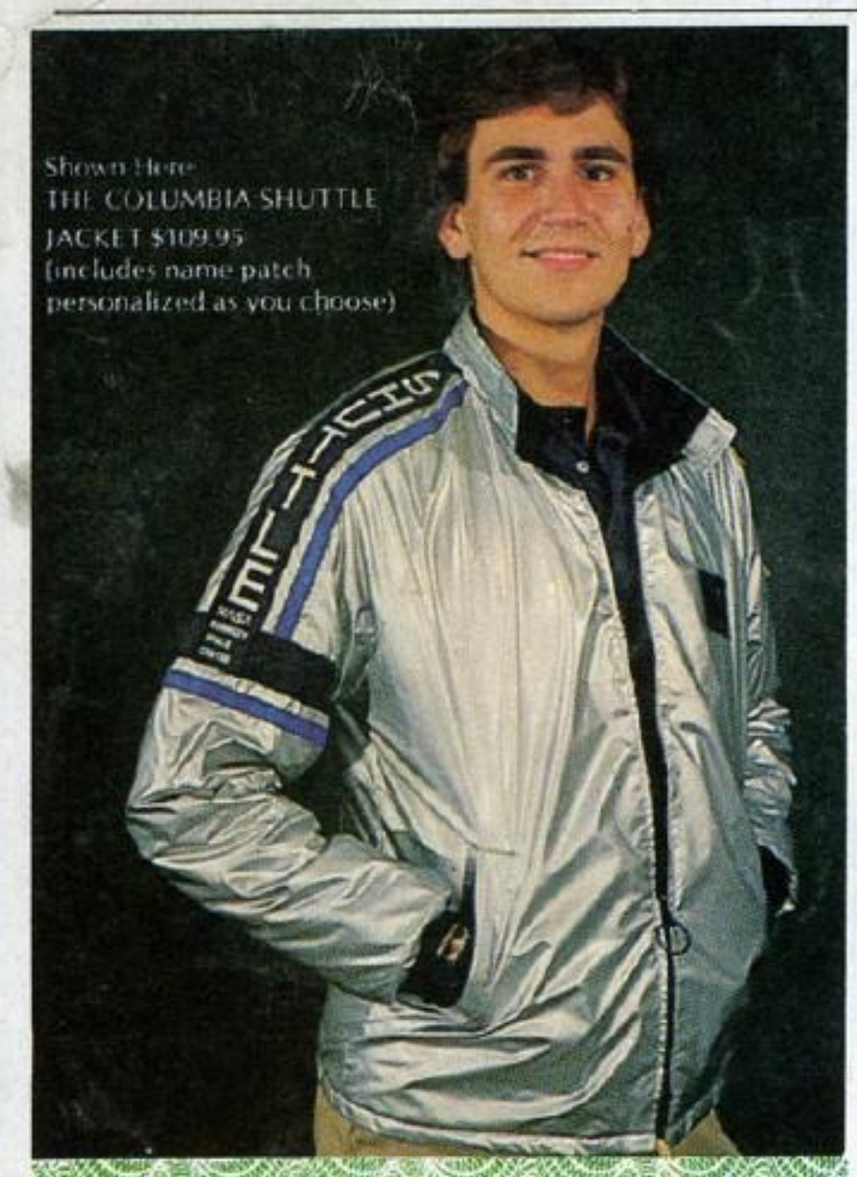

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